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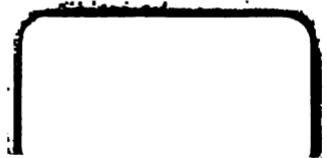
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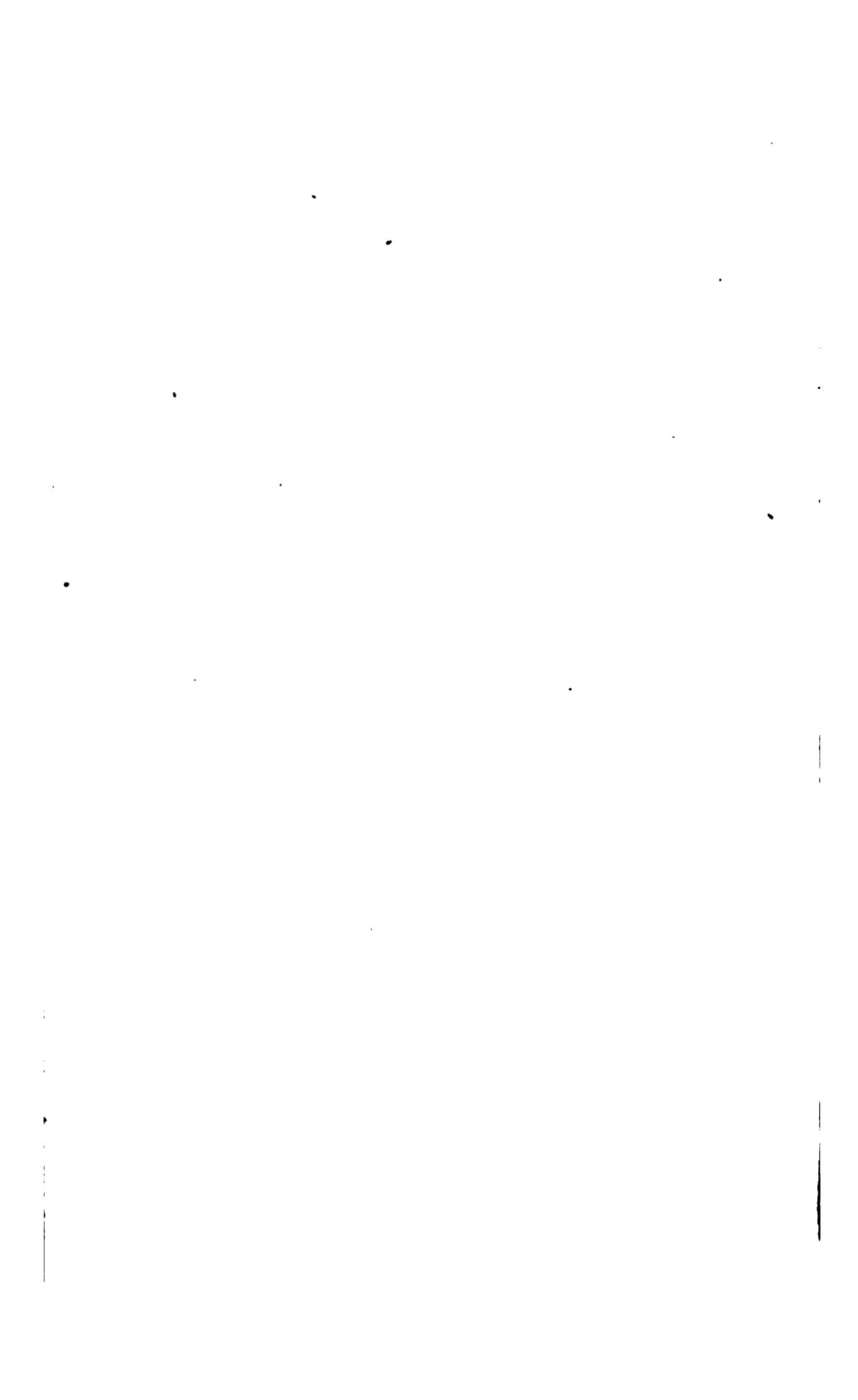


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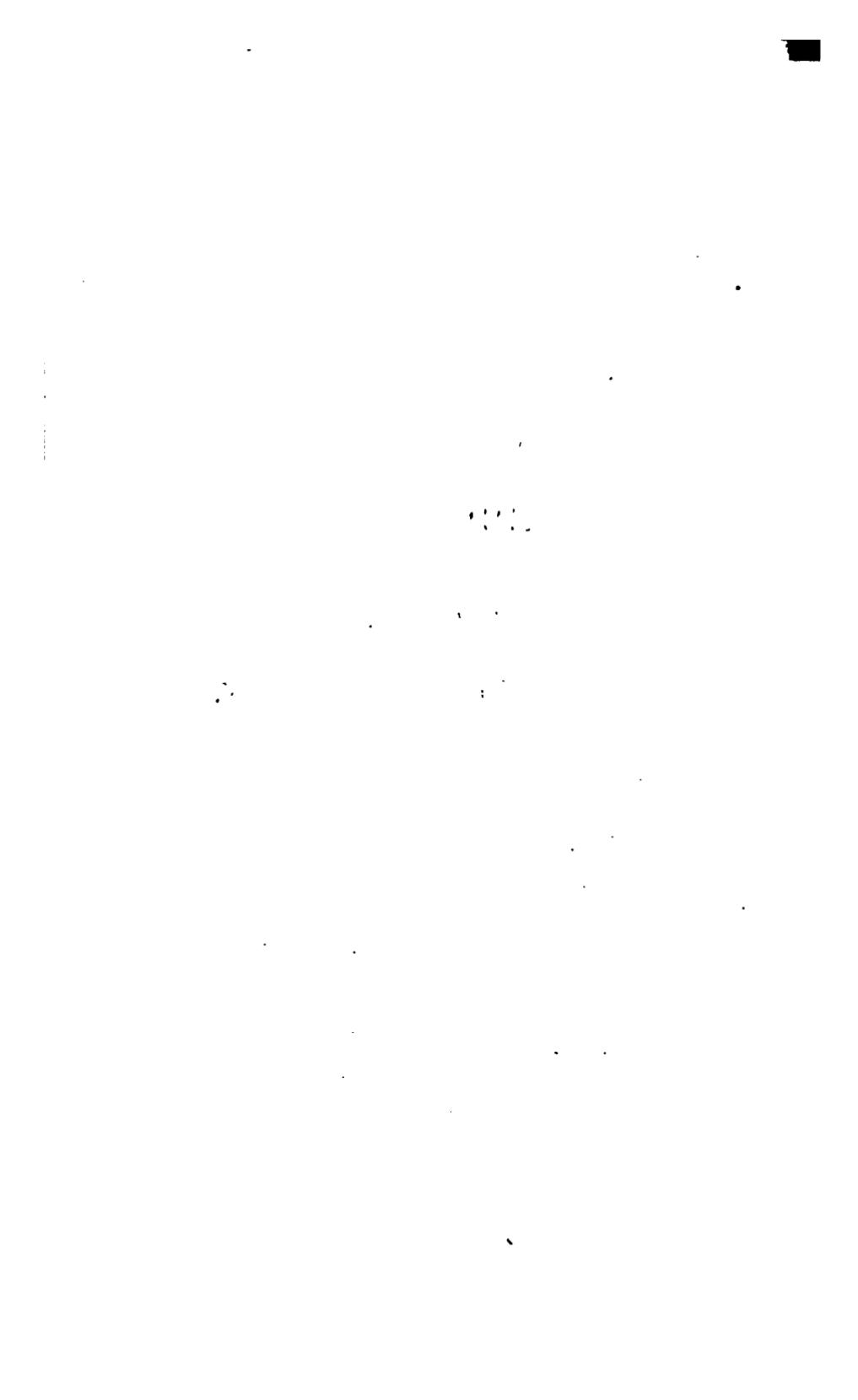
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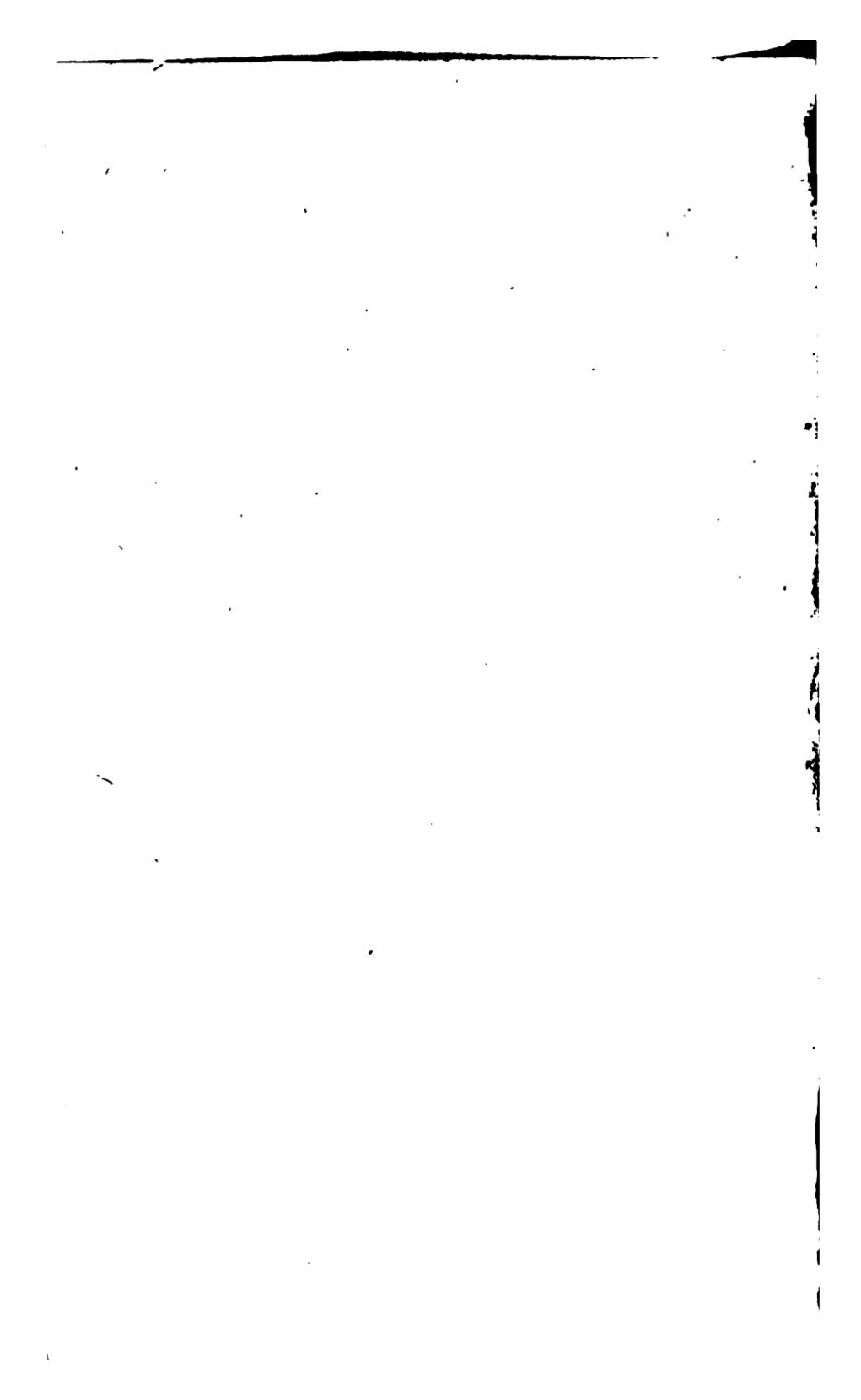
# **ESSAY**

**ON THE**

**PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION.**



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ESSAY  
ON THE  
PRINCIPLES  
OF  
TRANSLATION.

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THE THIRD EDITION,  
WITH LARGE ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS.

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Woodhouselee, Alexander Fraser

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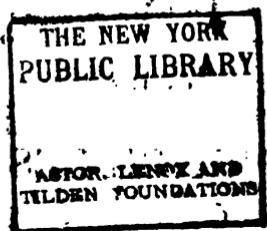
*Nec converti ut Interpres, sed ut Orator, sententias sidem et eorum formis  
tamquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem optime.*  
Cic. *De Opt. Gen. Orat. 14.*

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1813.



TO

# JAMES GREGORY,

M. D. F. R. S. EDIN.

PRINCIPAL PHYSICIAN TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND;

WHO, TO GREAT PROFESSIONAL ABILITY

AND EMINENCE IN GENERAL SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY,

UNITES THE MOST DISTINGUISHED CLASSICAL KNOWLEDGE

AND TASTE IN POLITE LITERATURE:

THIS ESSAY,

WHICH HAS BEEN HONOURED WITH HIS APPROBATION,

IS,

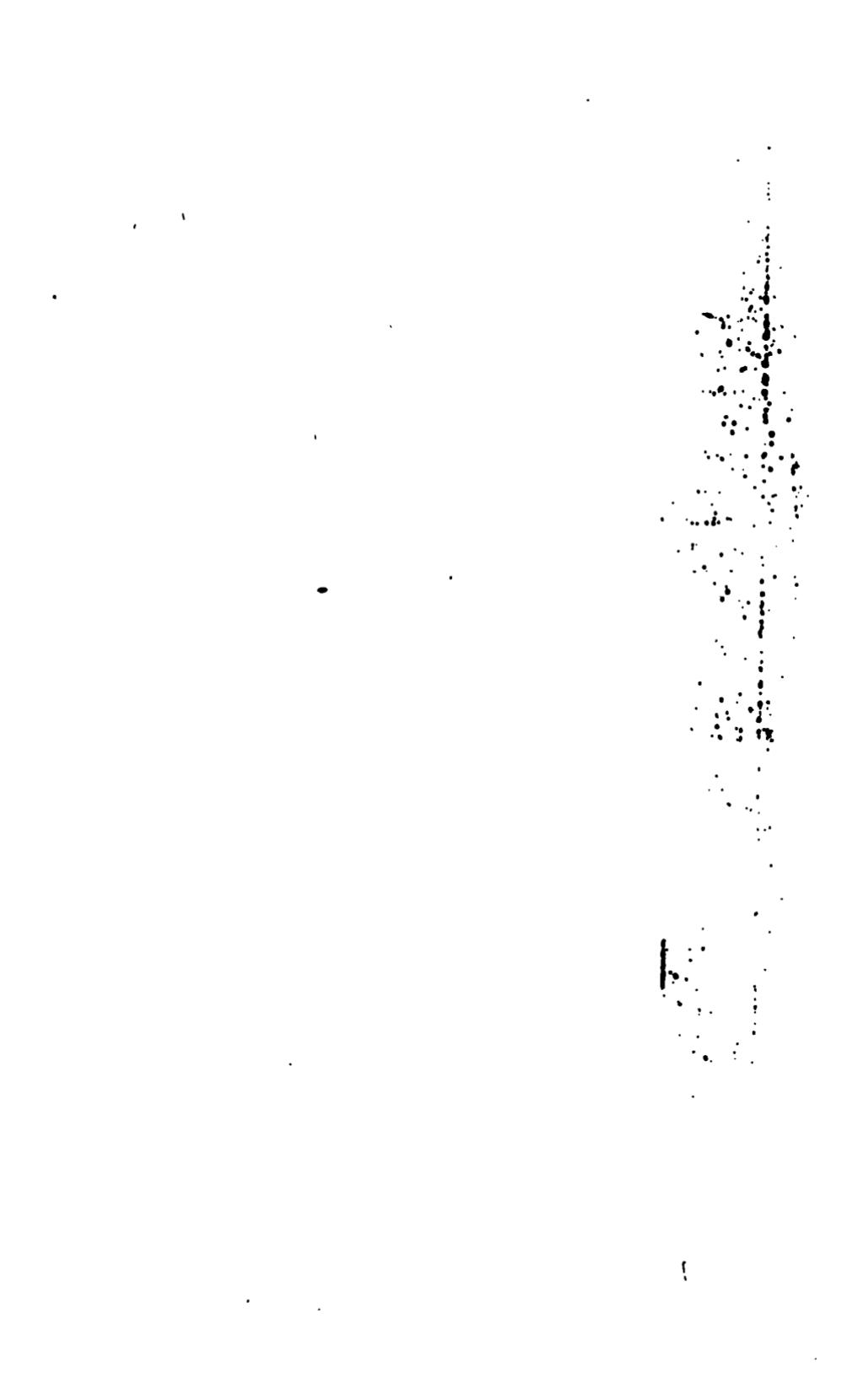
IN TOKEN OF A FRIENDSHIP

WHICH HAS STOOD THE TEST OF ALMOST HALF A CENTURY,

DEDICATED BY

ALEX. FRASER TYTLER.

WOODHOUSELEE, }  
August 1812. }



# PREFACE

TO THE

PRESENT EDITION.

In preparing for the Press a Third Edition of this Essay, the Author has endeavoured, by making ample additions to the *matter* of the Work, as well as by a careful revisal of the *style*, to render it less unworthy of that very flattering measure of approbation it has received from the literary world. Sensible that the didactic precepts which form the Laws of Translation, are best verified by the variety and aptness of the examples brought to illustrate them, he has in this edition very considerably enlarged the number of illustrations brought as examples both of excellencies and defects. Of these, in so far as reason and good sense afford a criterion, the opinion of all intelligent rea-

ders will probably be uniform. But, as it is not to be denied, that in many of the examples adduced in this Essay, the appeal lies not so much to any settled canons of criticism, as to individual taste; it will not be surprising, if in such instances, a diversity of opinion should take place: and the Author having exercised with great freedom his own judgment in such points, it would ill become him to blame others for using the same freedom in dissenting from his opinions. The chief benefit to be derived from all such discussions in matters of taste, does not so much arise from any certainty we can obtain of the rectitude of our critical decisions, as from the pleasing and useful exercise which they give to the finest powers of the mind, and those which most distinguish us from the inferior animals.

IN one material point at least, the Author may be allowed to flatter himself, that some advantage may accrue from his undertaking.

It will serve to demonstrate, that the Art of Translation is of more dignity and importance than has generally been imagined. It will afford sufficient conviction, that excellence in this art is neither a matter of easy attainment, nor what lies at all within the reach of ordinary abilities ; since it not only demands those acquired endowments which are the fruit of much labour and study, but requires a larger portion of native talents and of genuine taste, than are necessary for excelling in many departments of original composition.



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## ERRATA.

Pag. 46. line 6. *from the bottom*, καιός τ. καινός

— 146. *The Note is misplaced: It belongs to P. 149. as it refers to Horace's dialogue with Lydia.*

— 160. l. 6. χνίσνχαι, τ. χ' ιστύχαι;

— 162. l. 6. φιλησαν, τ. φιλησαν;

— 165. l. 8. Aëria τ. Aëra P. 166. *line last pass*, τ. paise,

— 169. l. 5. *from the bottom*, τινιας τ. τινιας

— 170. l. 8. *from the bottom*, Trajicos ε. Tragicos

— 261. l. 7. *from the bottom*, π' αλφιτα; τ. τ' αλφιτα;

— 271. l. 11: *from the bottom*, meaning τ. mean

# ESSAY

ON THE

## PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION.

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### INTRODUCTION.

HERE is perhaps no department of literature which has been less the object of cultivation, than the *Art of Translating*. Even among the ancients, who seem to have had a very just idea of its importance, and who have accordingly ranked it among the most useful branches of literary education, we meet with no attempt to unfold the principles of this art, or to reduce it to rules. In the works of Quintilian, of Cicero, and

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of the Younger Pliny, we find many passages which prove that these authors had made translation their peculiar study; and, conscious themselves of its utility, they have strongly recommended the practice of it, as essential towards the formation both of a good writer and an accomplished orator\*. But it is much to be regretted, that they who were so eminently well qualified to furnish instruction in the art itself, have contributed little more to its advancement than by some general recommendations of its importance. If indeed time had

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\* Vertere Græca in Latinum, veteres nostri oratores optinunt judicabant. Id se Lutius Crassus, in illis Ciceronis de oratore libris, dicit factitasse. Id Cicero sūt ipse personā frequentissimè præcipit. Quin etiam libros Platonis atque Xenophontis edidit, hoc genere translatos. Id Messalæ placuit, multæque sunt ab eo scriptæ ad hanc fidem orationes. *Quintil. Inst. Orat. l. 10. c. 5.*

Utile imprimis, ut multi præcipiunt, vel ex Græco in Latinum, vel ex Latino vertere in Græcum: quo genere exercitationis, proprietas splendorque verborum, copia figurarum, via explicandi, præterea imitatione optimorum, similia inventi faculta paratur: simul quæ legentem sefelliissent, transferentem fugere non possunt. *Plin. Epist. l. 7. Ep. 7.*

spared to us any complete or finished specimens of translation from the hand of those great masters, it had been some compensation for the want of actual precepts, to have been able to deduce them ourselves from those exquisite models. But of ancient translations the fragments that remain are so inconsiderable, and so much mutilated, that we can scarcely derive from them any advantage \*.

To the moderns the art of translation is of greater importance than it was to the ancients, in the same proportion that the great mass of ancient and of modern literature, accumulated up to the present times, bears to the general stock of learning in the most enlightened periods of antiquity. But it is a singular consideration, that under the daily experience of the advantages of good translations, in opening to us all the stores of ancient knowledge, and creating a free intercourse of science and of literature

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\* There remain of Cicero's translations some fragments of the *Economics* of Xenophon, the *Timæus* of Plato, and part of a poetical version of the *Phenomena* of Aratus.

between all modern nations, there should have been so little done towards the improvement of the art itself, by investigating its laws, or unfolding its principles. Unless a very short essay, published by M. D'Alembert, in his *Mélanges de Littérature, d'Histoire, &c.* as introductory to his versions of some pieces of Tacitus, and some remarks on translation by the Abbé Batteux, in his *Principes de la Littérature*, I have met with nothing that has been written professedly upon the subject of translation considered as an art, depending on fixed principles \*. The ob-

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\* When the first edition of this Essay was printed, the Author had not seen Dr Campbell's New Translation of the Gospels, then recently published, in one of the preliminary dissertations to which, that ingenious writer has treated professedly, though very briefly, "Of the chief things to be attended to in translating" The general laws of the art as briefly laid down in the first part of that dissertation are the same with those contained in this Essay; a circumstance which, independently of that satisfaction which always arises from finding our opinions warranted by the concurring judgment of persons of distinguished ingenuity and taste, affords a strong presumption that those opinions are founded in nature and in common sense. Another work on the same subject had likewise escaped the Author's observation when he first published this Essay; a poetical Essay on translation,

servations of M. D'Alembert, though extremely judicious, are too general to be considered as rules, or even elements of the

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by Mr Francklin, the ingenious translator of Sophocles and Lucian. It is, however, rather an apology of the art, and a vindication of its just rank in the scale of literature, than a didactic work explanatory of its principles. But above all, the Author had to regret, that when the former editions of this work were published, he had not been fortunate enough to meet with the work of a celebrated writer, professedly on the subject of translation, the treatise of M. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, *De optimo genere interpretandi*; of whose doctrines, however, he had some knowledge, from a pretty full extract of his work in the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de Grammaire et Littérature*, article *Traduction*. He has since seen and perused that small treatise, which, though accurately and methodically written, and containing many excellent observations, and much sound and judicious criticism, proposes a system of rules adapted only to that species of translation which professes to give a faithful interpretation of the text of an ancient classic; and is chiefly intended for the instruction of a *tiro* in the language of the original. It is of such *versions* that the learned Dr Pearce is treating, in distinction from that more free species of composition which is properly termed *Translation*, when he says; “ *Velim interpretem fidum esse, sed non sui ostentatorem* : “ *sed modò dictio ejus Latina, sint verba sensum Graeci* “ *auctoris clarè breviterque exponentia, non quaro an versio* “ *ornatum præ se ferat ; neque enim legenda, sed consulenda* “ *est illa ; ut de vi Graecorum verborum ignaris, præsenti*

art; and the remarks of the Abbé Batteux are employed chiefly on what may be termed the Philosophy of Grammar, and seem to have for their principal object the ascertainment of the analogy that one language bears to another, or the pointing out of those circumstances of construction and ar-

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“ sit auxilio: De iis hic versionibus intelligi valim que una  
“ cum Graeco auctoris textu imprimuntur: de cæteris enim  
“ seorsim editis, qualis est Gallica illa celeberrimi Boilavii  
“ versio, longè aliter res se habet: in his enim et ornatum  
“ et elegantiam quærimus: in his sensum magis quam  
“ verba paria paribus respondentia spectamus: nec possit  
“ ille interpres omnino placere, qui non, (prout ejus lingue  
“ qua utitur postulat ratio), aliquæ immutat, corripit, dilatat,  
“ ut ipsam vim spiritumque auctoris ob oculos legentium  
“ ponat.” *Præfatio Zach. Pearce in D. Longizzi versione.* It is evident, that the rules which are proper to the former kind of interpretation, are much too rigorous to be applied to the latter, or to that more ample and liberal species of translation, which professes to supply the place of the original author, and is adapted rather to convey to the reader the sense, the spirit and manner of his composition, than the strict meaning of all his words. The present work, therefore, which is relative to the more enlarged idea of Translation, and attempts to lay down the rules only of that species of composition, can have little interference with the Treatise of the learned Hust, which every scholar will find pleasure and profit in perusing. It may be incidentally remarked,

angement in which languages either agree with, or differ from each other \*.

WHILE such has been our ignorance of the principles of this art, it is not at all wonderful, that amidst the numberless translations which every day appear, both of the works of the ancients and moderns, there should be so few that are possessed of real merit. The utility of translations is universally felt, and therefore there is a continual

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that the judgments of Huet on the merits of the older interpreters of the Greek writers, are extremely valuable ; and though rather of the nature of opinions than of criticisms, evince a good taste, and great liberality of sentiment.

\* The Abbé Batteux, founding upon this principle, which he has by no means proved, That the arrangement of the Greek and Latin languages is the order of nature, and that the modern tongues ought never to deviate from that order, but for the sake of sense, perspicuity, or harmony ; proceeds to lay down such rules as the following : That the periods of the translation should accord in all their parts with those of the original—that their order, and even their length, should be the same—that all conjunctions should be scrupulously preserved, as being the joints or articulations of the members—that all adverbs should be ranged next to the verb, &c. It may be confidently asserted, that the Translator who shall endeavour to conform himself to these rules, even with the

demand for them. But this very circumstance has thrown the practice of translation into mean and mercenary hands. It is a profession which, it is generally believed, may be exercised with a very small portion of genius or abilities \*. "It seems to

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licence allowed of sacrificing a little of their rigour to sense, perspicuity, and harmony, will produce, on the whole, a very poor composition, which will be far from reflecting a just picture of his original.

\* Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,  
That few, but such as cannot write, translate.

*Denham to Sir R. Fanshaw.*

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hands impure dispense  
The sacred streams of ancient eloquence;  
Pedants assume the task for scholars fit,  
And blockheads rise interpreters of wit.

*Translation by Franklin.*

In a review of the *Works of Frederick II. King of Prussia*, translated by Mr Holcroft, we find the following remarks : "Perhaps at first sight we are apt to congratulate ourselves upon finding a man of acknowledged ability employed in communicating to our unlearned countrymen the contents of this memorable collection. But this, with us at least, is only a first thought ; and the translator must forgive us, if we express our regret at seeing him employed in so laborious and unaninating a drudgery. In the existence of an incident of this sort, there must be a fault some-

“ me,” says Dryden, “ that the true reason why we have so few versions that are tolerable, is, because there are so few have all the talents requisite for translation, and that there is so little praise and small encouragement for so considerable a part of learning.” *Pref. to Ovid's Epistles\**.

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“ where; and if not in himself, we must impute it to the defectiveness of our country and age, in social improvement, government and laws. The world, it may be, that is, a very small portion of the world, gains something, in having a foreign publication translated by a man who is capable of entering into the soul of his original; but, at any rate, it loses, out of all comparison, more than it gains.”

Here we have the solemn judgment of a grave and learned critic, that Translation is an employment fit only for Dunces! and that there is a radical defect in the government, laws and social improvements of a country, where any man of real talents is suffered thus to degrade himself, and mispend his valuable time.

\* The justness of the following observations, which form a striking contrast with those in the preceding note, will be felt, as soon as announced. “ A faithful and elegant translator is a character of the highest virtue in the literary republic. It implies public spirit, the most void of ostentation; a kind regard for the illiterate; a love of our native country, shewn by enriching its language with va-

It is, however, to the real honour of the literary character, and taste of the times, that there have been, and that there are men of genius among the moderns who have vindicated the dignity of this art so ill appreciated, and have furnished us with excellent translations, both of the ancient classics, and of the productions of foreign writers of our own and of former ages. These works lay open a great field of useful criticism; and from them it is certainly possible to draw the principles of that art which has never yet been methodised, and to establish its rules and precepts. Towards this purpose, even the worst translations would have their utility, as in such a critical exercise, it would be equally necessary to illustrate defects as to exemplify perfections.

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" Lovable books; a just regard for merit, of whatever country,  
" by placing the merit of some valuable foreigners in the  
" truest and fairest light; a care, a judgment and exactness  
" that original writings do not require, and some degree  
" of humility, in scarce aspiring to the name of an author.  
" But how few of those heroes and heroines are there!  
" The common herd of translators are mere murderers."

*Letter from Miss Talbot to Mrs Carter. Carter's Letters, vol. i. p. 126.*

An attempt of this kind forms the subject of the following Essay, in which the Author solicits indulgence, both for the imperfections of his treatise, and perhaps for some errors of opinion. His apology for the first, is, that he does not pretend to exhaust the subject, or to treat it in all its amplitude, but only to point out the general principles of the art; and for the last, that in matters where the ultimate appeal is to Taste, it is almost impossible to be secure of the solidity of our opinions, when the criterion of their truth is so very uncertain.



## CHAPTER I.

*Description of a good Translation.—General Rules flowing from that Description.*

If it were possible accurately to define, or, perhaps more properly, to describe what is meant by a *good Translation*, it is evident that a considerable progress would be made towards establishing the rules of the *Art*; for these Rules would flow naturally from that definition or description. But there is no subject of criticism on which there has been so much difference of opinion. If the genius and character of all languages were the same, it would be an easy task to translate from one into another; nor would any

thing more be requisite on the part of the translator, than fidelity and attention. But as the genius and character of languages are confessedly very different, two opinions have thence arisen, regarding the proper task of a translator. On the one hand, it has been affirmed, that it is the duty of a translator to attend only to the sense and spirit of his original, to make himself perfectly master of his author's ideas, and to communicate them in those expressions which he judges to be best suited to convey them. It has, on the other hand, been maintained, that, in order to constitute a perfect translation, it is not only requisite that the ideas and sentiments of the original author should be conveyed, but likewise his style and manner of writing, which, it is supposed, cannot be done without a strict attention to the arrangement of his sentences, and even to their order and construction \*. According

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\* *Battens de la Construction Oratoire, Par. 2. ch. 4.* Such likewise appears to be the opinion of M. Huet: “ *Optimum ergo illum esse dico interpretandi modum, quem auctoris sensus tenet primum, deinde ipsius etiam, si ita fert utriusque*

to the former idea of translation, it is allowable to improve and to embellish ; according to the latter, it is necessary to preserve even blemishes and defects ; and to these must likewise be superadded the harshness that must attend every copy in which the artist scrupulously studies to imitate the minutest lines or traces of his original.

As these two opinions form opposite extremes, it is not improbable that the point of perfection should be found between the two. I would therefore describe a good translation to be, *That, in which the merit of the original work is so completely transferred into another language, as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that*

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“ linguae facultas, verbis arctissimè adhaeret interpres, et na-  
“ tivum populi auctoris characterem, quod ejus fieri potest,  
“ adumbrat ; idque unum studet, ut nulla cum detractione in-  
“ minutum, nullo additamento auctum, sed integrum, cuique  
“ omniè ex parte simillimum, per quam fideliter exhibeat. —  
“ Universè ergo verbum de verbo exprimendum, et vocum  
“ etiam collocationem retinendum esse pronuncio, id modo  
“ per linguae qua utitur interpres facultatem liceat.” Huet  
“ de Interpretatione, lib. 1.

*language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work.*

Now, supposing this description to be a just one, which I think it is, let us examine what are the laws of translation which may be deduced from it.

It will follow,

I. THAT the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.

II. THAT the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.

III. THAT the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.

UNDER each of these general laws of translation, are comprehended a variety of subordinate precepts, which I shall notice in their order, and which, as well as the general laws, I shall endeavour to prove, and to illustrate by examples.

## CHAP. II.

*First general rule—A Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.—Knowledge of the language of the original, and acquaintance with the subject.—Examples of imperfect transfusion of the sense of the original.—What ought to be the conduct of a Translator where the sense is ambiguous.*

**I**N order that a translator may be enabled to give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work, it is indispensably necessary, that he should have a perfect knowledge of the language of the original, and a competent acquaintance with the subject of which it treats. If he is de-

ficient in either of these requisites, he can never be certain of thoroughly comprehending the sense of his author. M. Folard is allowed to have been a great master of the art of war. He undertook to translate Polybius, and to give a commentary illustrating the ancient Tactic, and the practice of the Greeks and Romans in the attack and defence of fortified places. In this commentary, he endeavours to shew, from the words of his author, and of other ancient writers, that the Greek and Roman engineers knew and practised almost every operation known to the moderns ; and that, in particular, the mode of approach by parallels and trenches, was perfectly familiar to them, and in continual use. Unfortunately M. Folard had but a very slender knowledge of the Greek language, and was obliged to study his author through the medium of a translation, executed by a Benedictine monk\*, who was entirely ignorant of the art of war. M. Guischardt, a great military genius, and

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\* Dom. Vincent Thaillier.

a thorough master of the Greek language, has shewn, that the work of Folard contains many capital misrepresentations of the sense of his author, in his account of the most important battles and sieges, and has demonstrated, that the complicated system formed by this writer of the ancient art of war, has no support from any of the ancient authorities fairly interpreted \*.

THE extreme difficulty of translating from the works of the ancients, is most discernible to those who are best acquainted with the ancient languages. It is but a small part of the genius and powers of a language which is to be learnt from dictionaries and grammars. There are innumerable niceties, not only of construction and of idiom, but even in the signification of words, which are discovered only by much reading, and critical attention.

A very learned author, and acute critic \*, has, in treating “ of the causes of the differences in languages,” remarked, that a principal difficulty in the art of translating arises from this circumstance, “ that there are certain words in every language which but imperfectly correspond to any of the words of other languages.” Of this kind, he observes, are most of the terms relating to morals, to the passions, to matters of sentiment, or to the objects of the reflex and internal senses. Thus the Greek words ἀρετη, σωφροσυνη, εἰλισος, have not their sense precisely and perfectly conveyed by the Latin words *virtus*, *temperantia*, *misericordia*, and still less by the English words, *virtue*, *temperance*, *mercy*. The Latin word *virtus* is frequently synonymous to *valour*, a sense which is never conveyed by the English word *virtue*. *Temperantia*, Latin, implies moderation in every desire, and is defined by Cicero, *Moderatio cupiditatum rationi obe-*

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\* Dr George Campbell, Preliminary Dissertations to a new Translation of the Gospels.

*diens* \*. The English word *temperance*, in its ordinary use, is limited to moderation in eating and drinking :

— — — — — Observe

The rule of not too much, by *temperance* taught,  
In what thou eat'st and drink'st.

PAR. LOSR, B. II.

It is true, that Spenser has used the term in its more extensive signification :

He calm'd his wrath with goodly *temperance*.

But no modern prose-writer has authorised such extension of its meaning.

THE following passage is quoted by the ingenious writer above mentioned, to shew, in the strongest manner, the extreme difficulty of apprehending the precise import of words of this order in dead languages :  
 “ *Ægritudo est opinio recens mali præsentis,*  
 “ *in quo demitti contrahique animo rectum*  
 “ *esse videatur. Ægritudini subjiciuntur*

B 3

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\* Cic. de Fin. I. 2.

“ *angor, mæror, dolor, luctus, ærumna, afflictatio* : *angor est ægritudo premens, mæror*  
 “ *ægritudo flebilis, ærumna ægritudo laboriosa, dolor ægritudo crucians, afflictatio*  
 “ *ægritudo cum vexatione corporis, luctus*  
 “ *ægritudo ex ejus qui carus fuerat, interitus*  
 “ *acerbo* \*.” — “ Let any one,” says D’Alembert, “ examine this passage with attention, and say honestly, whether, if he had not known of it, he would have had any idea of those nice shades of signification here marked, and whether he would not have been much embarrassed, had he been writing a dictionary, to distinguish, with accuracy, the words *ægritudo, mæror dolor, angor, luctus, ærumna, afflictatio*.”

THE fragments of Varro, *de Lingua Latina*, the treatises of Festus and of Nonius, the *Origines* of Isiodorus Hispalensis, the work of Ausonius Popma, *de Differentiis Verborum*, the *Synonymes* of the Abbé Girard, the *Synonymes Latins* of Dumesnil,

and the elaborate work of Professor Hill on the same subject, will furnish numberless instances of those very delicate shades of distinction in the signification of words, which nothing but the most intimate acquaintance with a language can teach ; but without the knowledge of which distinctions in the original, and an equal power of discrimination of the corresponding terms of his own language, no translator can be said to possess the primary requisites for the task he undertakes.

BUT a translator, thoroughly master of the language, and competently acquainted with the subject, may yet fail to give a complete transcript of the ideas of his original author.

M. D'ALEMBERT has favoured the public with some admirable translations from Tacitus ; and it must be acknowledged, that he possessed every qualification requisite for the task he undertook. If, in the course of the following observations, I may have occasion to criticise any part of his writings,

or those of other authors of equal celebrity, I avail myself of the just sentiment of M. Duclos, "On peut toujours relever les " défauts des grands hommes, et peut-être " sont ils les seuls qui en soient dignes, et " dont la critique soit utile." *Duclos, Pref. de l'Hist. de Louis XI.*

TACITUS, in describing the conduct of *Piso* upon the death of Germanicus, says: *Piso-nem interim apud Coum insulam nuncius ad-sequitur, excessisse Germanicum*; Tacit. An. lib. 2. c. 75. This passage is thus translated by M. D'Alembert, "Pison apprend, dans " l'isle de Cos, la mort de Germanicus." In translating this passage, it is evident that M. D'Alembert has not given the complete sense of the original. The sense of Tacitus is, that Piso was overtaken on his voyage homeward, at the Isle of Cos, by a messenger, who informed him that Germanicus was dead. According to the French translator, we understand simply, that when Piso arrived at the Isle of Cos, he was informed that Germanicus was dead. We do not learn from this, that a messenger had followed

him on his voyage to bring him this intelligence. The fact was, that Piso purposely lingered on his voyage homeward, expecting this very messenger who here overtook him. But, by M. D'Alembert's version it might be understood, that Germanicus had died in the island of Cos, and that Piso was informed of his death by the islanders immediately on his arrival. The passage is thus translated, with perfect precision, by D'Ablancourt : " Cependant Pison apprend la nouvelle de cette mort par un courrier exprès, " qui l'atteignit en l'isle de Cos."

After Piso had received intelligence of the death of Germanicus, he deliberated whether to proceed on his voyage to Rome, or to return immediately to Syria, and there put himself at the head of the legions. His son advised the former measure ; but his friend Domitius Celer argued warmly for his return to the province, and urged, that all difficulties would give way to him, if he had once the command of the army, and had increased his force by new levies. " At si teneat exercitum, augeat

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“ *vires, multa quæ provideri non possunt  
in melius casura,*” *An. l. 2. c. 77.* This M. D'Alembert has translated, “ Mais que  
s'il savoit se rendre redoutable à la tête  
des troupes, le hazard ameneroit des cir-  
constances heureuses et imprévues.” In  
the original passage, Domitius advises Piso  
to adopt two distinct measures ; the first, to  
obtain the command of the army, and the  
second, to increase his force by new levies.  
These two distinct measures are confound-  
ed together by the translator, nor is the  
sense of either of them accurately given ;  
for from the expression, “ se rendre redout-  
able à la tête des troupes,” we may under-  
stand, that Piso already had the command  
of the troops, and that all that was requi-  
site, was to render himself formidable in  
that station, which he might do in various  
other ways than by increasing the levies.

TACITUS, speaking of the means by which  
Augustus obtained an absolute ascendancy  
over all ranks in the state, says, *Cùm cæte-  
ri nobilium, quanto quis servitio promptior,  
opibus et honoribus extollerentur* : *An. l. 1.*

c. 1. This D'Alembert has translated, "Le reste des nobles trouvoit dans les richesses et dans les honneurs la récompense de l'esclavage." Here the translator has but half expressed the meaning of his author, which is, that "the rest of the nobility were exalted to riches and honours, in proportion as Augustus found in them an aptitude and disposition to servile obedience :" or, as it is well translated by Mr Murphy, "the leading men were raised to wealth and honours, in proportion to the alacrity with which they courted the yoke\*."

CICERO, in a letter to the Proconsul Philippus, says, *Quod si Romæ te vidissem, carumque gratias egisset, quod tibi L. Egnatius familiarissimus meus absens, L. Oppius præsens curæ fuisset.* This passage is thus translated by Mr Melmoth : " If I were in Rome, I should have waited upon you for this purpose in person, and in order

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\* The excellent translation of Tacitus by Mr Murphy had not appeared when the first edition of this Essay was published.

“ likewise to make my acknowledgments to  
“ you for your favours to my friends Egna-  
“ tius and Oppius.” Here the sense is not  
completely rendered, as there is an omis-  
sion of the meaning of the words *absens* and  
*præsens*.

WHERE the sense of an author is doubtful, and where more than one meaning can be giveh to the same passage or expression, (which, by the bye, is always a defect in composition), the translator is called upon to exercise his judgment, and to select that meaning which is most consonant to the train of thought in the whole passage, or to the author's usual mode of thinking, and of expressing himself. To imitate the obscurity or ambiguity of the original, is a fault \*; and it is still a greater,

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\* M. Huet, however, thinks otherwise, and his opinion is a necessary consequence from the strict method of interpretation for which he contends: *Verbum ambiguè dictum est, et duplē admittiū explicationem.*—*Cerè res in medio posita ut erat, ita debuit consistere, et verbum anceps anicipiti verbo reddi, ipsaque sententia ambiguitas repræsentari.* De Opt. Gen. Interpret. p. 27. Edit. Lond: 1684.

to give more than one meaning, as D'Alembert has done in the beginning of the Preface of Tacitus. The original runs thus: *Urbem Romam a principio Reges habuere. Libertatem et consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur; neque Decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque Tribunorum militum consulaire jus diu valuit.* The ambiguous sentence is, *Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur*; which may signify either, “Dictators were chosen for a limited “time,” or, “Dictators were chosen on “particular occasions or emergencies.” D'Alembert saw this ambiguity; but how did he remove the difficulty? Not by exercising his judgment in determining between the two different meanings; but by giving them both in his translation. “On crooit “au besoin des dictateurs passagers.” Now, this double sense it was impossible that Tacitus should ever have intended to convey by the words *ad tempus*: and between the two meanings of which the words are susceptible, a very little critical judgment was requisite to decide. I know not that *ad tempus* is ever used in the sense

of “for the occasion or emergency.” If this had been the author’s meaning, he would probably have used either the words *ad occasionem*, or *pro re nata*. But even allowing the phrase to be susceptible of this meaning \*, it is not the meaning which Tacitus chose to give it in this passage. That the author meant that the Dictator was created for a limited time, is, I think, evident from the sentence immediately following, which is connected by the copulative *neque* with the preceding: *Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur: neque Decemviralis potestus ultra biennium valuit*: “The office of “Dictator was instituted for a limited time: “Nor did the power of the Decemvirs sub-“sist beyond two years.”

M. D’ALEMBERT’s translation of the concluding sentence of this chapter is cen-

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\* Mr Gordon has translated the words *ad tempus*, “in press-  
sing emergencies;” and Mr Murphy, “in sudden emergen-  
cies only.” This sense is, therefore, probably warranted  
by good authorities. But it is evidently not the sense of the  
author in this passage, as the context sufficiently indicates.

surable on the same account. Tacitus says, ·  
*Sed veteris populi Romani prospera vel ad-  
versa, claris scriptoribus memorata sunt ;  
temporibusque Augusti dicendis non defuere  
decora ingenia, donec gliscente adulazione de-  
ttererentur. Tiberii, Caiique, et Claudii,  
ac Neronis res, florentibus ipsis, ob metum  
false : postquam occiderant, reverentibus odiiis  
compositæ sunt. Inde consilium mihi paucæ  
de Augusto, et extrema tradere : mos Tiberii  
principatum, et cetera, sine ira et studio, quo-  
rum causas precul habeo.* Thus translated  
by D'Alembert : “ Des auteurs illustres ont  
“ fait connoître la gloire et les malheurs  
“ de l'ancienne république ; l'histoire même  
“ d'Auguste a été écrite par de grands gé-  
“ nies, jusqu'aux tems où la nécessité de  
“ flatter les condamna au silence. La  
“ crainte ménagea tant qu'ils vécurent, Ti-  
“ bère, Caius, Claude, et Néron ; des qu'ils  
“ ne furent plus, la haine toute récente les  
“ déchira. J'écrirai donc en peu de mots  
“ la fin du règne d'Auguste, puis celui de  
“ Tibère, et les suivans ; sans fiel et sans  
“ basesse : mon caractère m'en éloigne, et  
“ les tems m'en dispensent.” In the last

part of this passage, the translator has given two different meanings to the same clause, *sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo*, to which the author certainly meant to annex only *one* meaning ; and that, as I think, a different one from either of those expressed by the translator. To be clearly understood, I must give my own version of the whole passage. “ The history of the “ ancient republic of Rome, both in its “ prosperous and in its adverse days, has “ been recorded by eminent authors : Even “ the reign of Augustus has been happily “ delineated, down to those times when the “ prevailing spirit of adulation put to silence “ every ingenuous writer. The annals of “ Tiberius, of Caligula, of Claudius, and of “ Nero, written while they were alive, were “ falsified from terror ; as were those histo- “ ries composed after their death, from ha- “ tred to their recent memories. For this “ reason, I have resolved to attempt a short “ delineation of the latter part of the reign “ of Augustus ; and afterwards that of Ti- “ berius, and of the succeeding princes ; “ conscious of perfect impartiality, as, from

“ the remoteness of the events, I have no  
“ motive, either of odium or adulation.”  
In the last clause of this sentence, I believe  
I have given the true version of *sine ira et*  
*studio, quorum causas procul habeo*: But  
if this be the true meaning of the au-  
thor, M. D'Alembert has given two diffe-  
rent meanings to the same sentence, and  
neither of them the true one: “ sans fiel  
“ et sans bassesse: mon caractere m'en  
“ éloigne, et les tems m'en dispensent.”  
According to the French translator, the his-  
torian pays a compliment first to his own  
character, and 2dly, to the character of the  
times; both of which he makes the pledges  
of his impartiality: but it is perfectly clear  
that Tacitus neither meant the one com-  
pliment nor the other; but intended sim-  
ply to say, that the remoteness of the events  
which he proposed to record, precluded eve-  
ry motive either of unfavourable prejudice  
or of adulation.



## CHAPTER III.

*Whether it is allowable for a Translator to add to or retrench the ideas of the original.—Examples of the use and abuse of this liberty.—The liberty allowed to the Translator depends on the nature of the work.*

If it be necessary that a translator should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work, it becomes a question, whether it is allowable in any case to add to the ideas of the original what may appear to give greater force or illustration ; or to take from them what may seem to weaken them from redundancy. To give a general answer to this question, I would say, that

this liberty may be used, but with the greatest caution. It must be further observed, that the superadded idea shall have the most necessary connection with the original thought, and actually increase its force. And, on the other hand, that whenever an idea is cut off by the translator, it must be only such as is an accessory, and not a principal in the clause or sentence. It must likewise be confessedly redundant, so that its retrenchment shall not impair or weaken the original thought. Under these limitations, a translator may exercise his judgment, and assume to himself, thus far, the character of an original writer.

It will be allowed, that in the following instance the translator, the elegant *Vincent Bourne*, has added a very beautiful idea, which, while it has a most natural connection with the original thought, greatly heightens its energy and tenderness. The two following stanzas are a part of the fine ballad of *Colin and Lucy*, by Tickell.

To-morrow in the church to wed,  
 Impatient both prepare ;  
 But know, fond maid, and know, false man,  
 That Lucy will be there.

There bear my corse, ye comrades, bear,  
 The bridegroom blithe to meet ;  
 He in his wedding-trim so gay,  
 I in my winding-sheet.

Thus translated by Bourne :

Jungere cras dextre dextram properatis uterque,  
 Et tardè interea creditis ire diem.  
 Credula quin virgo, juvenis quin perfide, uterque.  
 Scite, quod et pacti Lucia testis erit.

Exanguis, oh ! illuc, comites, deferite cadaver,  
 Qua semel, oh ! iterum congregiamur, ait ;  
 Vestibus ornatus sponsalibus ille, caputque  
 Ipsa sepulchrali vincita, pedesque stolâ.

In this translation, which is altogether excellent, it is evident, that there is one most beautiful idea superadded by Bourne, in the line *Qua semel*, &c. ; which wonderfully improves upon the original thought. In the original, the speaker, deeply impressed with the sense of her wrongs, has no other idea than to overwhelm her perfured

lover with remorse at the moment of his approaching nuptials. In the translation, amidst this prevalent idea, the speaker all at once gives way to an involuntary burst of tenderness and affection, “ Oh, let us “ meet once more, and for the last time !” *Semel, oh ! iterum congregiamur, ait.*—It was only a man of exquisite feeling, who was capable of thus improving on so fine an original \*.

ACHILLES, (in the first book of the Iliad), won by the persuasion of Minerva, resolves, though indignantly, to give up Briseis, and Patroclus is commanded to deliver her to the heralds of Agamemnon :

Ω, φέτος πάτεραλε; δι' φίλων ἀποτελεῖσθαι  
Εἰς τὸ δέρμα εἰλεός Βρισείδα, πατελλάσσειν.  
Δέρμα τὸ ἄρρεν τὸ τούτων ἵππον σταύρον Αχαιῶν.  
Ἡ δέ τοι πάτησιν γυνὴ καίσι.

ILIAS, A. 345.

\* There is a French translation of this ballad by Le Mierre, which, though far inferior to that of Bourne, has yet a great deal of the tender simplicity of the original. See a few stanzas in the Appendix, NO. I.

“ Thus he spoke. But Patroclus was obedient to his dear friend. He brought out the beautiful Briseis from the tent, and gave her to be carried away. They returned to the ships of the Greeks; but she unwillingly went, along with her attendants.”

Patroclus now th' unwilling Beauty brought;  
She in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought,  
Past silent, as the heralds held her hand,  
And oft look'd back, slow moving o'er the strand.

Popl.

The ideas contained in the three last lines are not indeed expressed in the original, but they are implied in the word *ansera*; for she who goes unwillingly, will move slowly, and *oft look back*. The amplification highly improves the effect of the picture. It may be incidentally remarked, that the pause in the third line, *Past silent*, is admirably characteristic of the slow and hesitating motion which it describes.

In the poetical version of the 137th Psalm,  
by Arthur Johnston, a composition of clas-

sical elegance, there are several examples of ideas superadded by the translator, intimately connected with the original thoughts, and greatly heightening their energy and beauty.

Urbe procul Solymæ, fusi Babylonis ad undas  
 Flevimus, et lachrymæ fluminis instar erant;  
 Sacra Sion toties animo totiesque recursans,  
 Materiem lachrymis prebuit usque novis:  
 Desuetae saliceta lyras, et muta ferebant  
 Nahlia, servili non temeranda manu.  
 Qui patria exegit, patriam qui subruit, hostis  
 Pendula captivos sumere plectra jubet:  
 Inaperat et letos, mediis in fletibus, hymnos,  
 Quosque Sion cecinit, nunc tacitura ! modos.  
 Ergone paeta Deo peregrinæ barbita genti  
 Fas erit, et sacras prostituisse lyras?  
 Ante meo, Solyme, quam tu de pectore cedas,  
 Nesciat Hebreæam tangere dextra chelyn.  
 Te nisi tollat ovans unam super omnia, lingua  
 Faucibus hærescat sidere tacta meis.  
 Ne tibi noxa recens, scelerum Deus ulti ! Idumes  
 Excidat, et Solymis perniciosa dies:  
 Vertite, clamabant, fundo jam vertite templum,  
 Tectaque montanis jam habitanda feris.  
 Te quoque poena manet, Babylon ! quibus astra lacescet  
 Culmina mox fient, quod premis, sequa solo:

*Felicem, qui clade pari data damna rependet;*

*Et feret ultrices in tua tecta faces !*

*Felicem, quisquis scopulis illidet acutis*

*Dulcia materno pignora raptâ sinu !*

I pass over the superadded idea in the second line, *lachrymæ fluminis instar erant*, because bordering on the hyperbole, it derogates, in some degree, from the chaste simplicity of the original. To the simple fact, “ We hanged our harps on the willows “ in the midst thereof,” which is most poetically conveyed by *Desuetas saliceta lyras, et muta ferebant nablia*, is superadded all the force of sentiment in that beautiful expression, which so strongly paints the mixed emotions of a proud mind under the influence of poignant grief, heightened by shame, *servili non temeranda manu*. So likewise in the following stanza there is the noblest improvement of the sense of the original :

*Imperat et letos, mediis in fletibus, hymnos,*

*Quosque Sion cecinit, nunc taciturna ! modos.*

THE reflection on the melancholy silence that now reigned on that sacred hill, “ once

“vocal with their songs,” is an additional thought, the force of which is better felt than it can be conveyed by words.

An ordinary translator sinks under the energy of his original: the man of genius frequently rises above it. Horace, arraigning the abuse of riches, makes the plain and honest Ofellus thus remonstrate with a wealthy Epicure, (*Sat. 2. b. 2.*)

*Cur eget indignus quisquam te divite?*

A question, to the energy of which it was not easy to add, but which has received the most spirited improvement from Mr Pope:

*How darest thou let one worthy man be poor?*

An improvement is sometimes very happily made, by substituting figure and metaphor for simple sentiment; as in the following example, from Mr Mason’s excellent translation of Du Fresnoy’s Art of Painting. In the original, the poet, treat-

ing of the merits of the antique statues, says :

— *queis posterior nil protulit aetas  
Condignum, et non inferius longè, arte modoque.*

This is a simple fact, in the perusal of which the reader is struck with nothing else but the truth of the assertion. Mark how in the translation the same truth is conveyed in one of the finest figures of poetry :

— *with reluctant gaze  
To these the genius of succeeding days  
Looks dazzled up, and, as their glories spread,  
Hides in his mantle his diminish'd head.*

The description of the Spring, in the second Georgic, is possessed of very high poetic merit; and the following passage, from which Buchanan has taken the idea of his *Calendæ Maia*, is consummately beautiful :

*Non alios prima crescentis origine mundi  
Illuxisse dies, aliumve habuisse tenorem  
Credidérim: ver illud erat, ver magnus agebat  
Orbis, et hybernis partebant flatibus Euri;  
Quum primæ lucem pecudes hausere, virumque  
Ferrea progenies duris caput extulit arvis  
Immissæque feræ silvis, et sidera cœlo.*

IN a late translation of the *Georgies* by Mr Sotheby, a work of very high merit, and by far the best that has yet appeared of that Poem, this passage receives a fine improvement, by the substitution of an apostrophe, for the simple narrative :

Yes ! lovely Spring ! when rose the world to birth,  
 Thy genial radiance dawn'd upon the earth ;  
 Beneath thy balmy air creation grew,  
 And no bleak gale on infant nature blew.  
 When herds first drank the light ; from earth's rude bed  
 When first man's iron race uprear'd its head ;  
 When first to beasts the wilds and woods were given,  
 And stars unnumber'd pav'd th' expanse of heaven, &c.

IN the two following lines, Horace inculcates a striking moral truth ; but the figure in which it is conveyed, has nothing of dignity :

Pallida mors sequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas  
 Regumque turrea. —

MALHERBE has given to the same sentiment a high portion of tenderness, and even sublimity :

Le pauvre en sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre,  
 Est sujet à ses loix ;

Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre,  
N'en défend pas nos rois \*.

CICERO writes thus to Trebatius, Ep. ad fam. lib. 7. ep. 17. *Tanquam enim syngrapham ad Imperatorem, non epistolam attulisses, sic pecuniam ablatam domum redire properabas; nec tibi in mentem veniebat, eos ipsos qui cum syngraphis venissent Alexandriam, nullum adhuc nummum auferre potuisse.* The passage is thus translated by Melmoth, b. 2. l. 12. “ One would have imagined “ indeed, you had carried a bill of exchange “ upon Cæsar, instead of a letter of recom- “ mendation : As you seemed to think you “ had nothing more to do, than to receive “ your money, and to hasten home again. “ But money, my friend, is not so easily “ acquired ; and I could name some of our “ acquaintance, who have been obliged to “ travel as far as Alexandria in pursuit of “ it, without having yet been able to obtain

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\* From the modern allusion, *barrières du Louvre*, this passage, strictly speaking, falls under the description of imitation, rather than of translation. See *postea*, ch. xi.

“ even their just demands.” The expressions, “ *money, my friend, is not so easily acquired,*” and, “ *I could name some of our acquaintance,*” are not to be found in the original; but they have an obvious connection with the ideas of the original: they increase their force, while, at the same time, they give ease and spirit to the whole passage.

I question much if a licence so unbounded as the following is justifiable, on the principle of giving either ease or spirit to the original.

In Lucian’s Dialogue *Timon*, Gnathonides, after being beaten by Timon, says to him,

Ἄλλα φιλοσκάμματα σύ γε ἀλλα τέ τὸ συμπόσιον; ἀς κατόν τι σοι ἀσμα τῶν ιεοδιδάκτων διθυράμβων ἦχα κομίζων.

“ You were always fond of a joke—but  
 “ where is the banquet? for I have brought  
 “ you a new dithiramic song, which I have  
 “ lately learned.”

In Dryden's *Lucian*, "translated by several eminent hands," this passage is thus translated: " Ah ! Lord, Sir, I see you keep up your old merry humour still ; you love dearly to rally and break a jest. Well but have you got a noble supper for us, and plenty of delicious inspiring claret ? Hark ye, Timon, I've got a virgin-song for ye, just new composed, and smells of the gamut : 'Twill make your heart dance within you, old boy. A very pretty she-player, I vow to Gad, that I have an interest in, taught it me this morning."

THERE is both ease and spirit in this translation ; but the licence which the translator has assumed, of superadding to the ideas of the original, is beyond all bounds.

AN equal degree of judgment is requisite when the translator assumes the liberty of retrenching the ideas of the original.

AFTER the fatal horse had been admitted within the walls of Troy, Virgil thus de-

scribes the coming on of that night which was to witness the destruction of the city :

*Vertitur interea cælum, et ruat oceano nox,  
Involvens umbrâ magnâ terramque polumque,  
Myrmidonumque dolos.*

THE principal effect attributed to the night, in this description, and certainly the most interesting, is its concealment of the treachery of the Greeks. Add to this, the beauty which the picture acquires from this association of natural with moral effects. How inexcusable then must Mr Dryden appear, who, in his translation, has suppressed the *Myrmidonumque dolos* altogether ?

Mean time the rapid heav'ns roll'd down the light,  
And on the shaded ocean rush'd the night :  
Our men secure, &c.

OGILBY, with less of the spirit of poetry, has done more justice to the original :

Meanwhile night rose from sea, whose spreading shade  
Hides heaven and earth, and plots the Grecians laid.

Mr Pope, in his translation of the Iliad, has, in the parting scene between Hector and Andromache (vi. 466), omitted a particular respecting the dress of the nurse, which he thought an impropriety in the picture. Homer says,

Ἄψ δὲ ταῖς προς πολὺν τοῦ γαροι τιθηνες  
Επλίνθη ιαχων.

“ The boy crying, threw himself back into  
“ the arms of his nurse, whose waist was  
“ elegantly girt.” Mr Pope, who has sup-  
pressed the epithet descriptive of the waist,  
has incurred on that account the censure of  
Mr Melmoth, who says, “ He has not touch-  
“ ed the picture with that delicacy of pen-  
“ cil which graces the original, as he has  
“ entirely lost the beauty of one of the fi-  
“ gures.—Though the hero and his son  
“ were designed to draw our principal at-  
“ tention, Homer intended likewise that  
“ we should cast a glance towards the  
“ nurse.” *Fitzosborne's Letters*, l. 43. If  
this was Homer's intention, he has, in  
my opinion, shewn less good taste in this

instance than his translator, who has, I think with much propriety, left out the compliment to the nurse's waist altogether. And this liberty of the translator was perfectly allowable; for Homer's epithets are often nothing more than mere expletives, or additional designations of his persons. They are always, it is true, significant of some attribute of the person; but they are often applied by the poet in circumstances where the mention of that attribute is quite preposterous. It would shew very little judgment in a translator, who should honour Patroclus with the epithet of *godlike*, while he is blowing the fire to roast an ox; or bestow on Agamemnon the designation of *King of many nations*, while he is helping Ajax to a large piece of the chine.

But, on the other hand, it is evident, that no such liberty of retrenchment is pardonable in a translator, when the epithet suppressed is characteristic of the object, or gives additional force to the sentiment. Thus, in the opening part of the scene above alluded to,

where Andromache comes out to meet her husband :

"Η εἰ τοτὲ φίλος, ἅμα τὸν ἀμφίπολος πάνα σύντη,  
Πᾶντας ἵτις πάλιν ἔχει τὸνταλάφροντα, πίπτεις αὐτονό,  
Ἐπειρίθητος ἀγαπητὸν ἀλύκουν ἀπίστης καλέει.

The nurse stood near, in whose embraces priest,  
His only hope hung smiling at her breast,  
Whom each soft charm and early grace adorn,  
Fair as the new-born star that gilds the morn.

Mr Pope has here inexcusably suppressed the highly significant epithet, *ἄλαφροντα*, which so beautifully expresses the *insensibility* of the infant (" having no feeling of its own misery").

IT were to be wished, that Mr Melmoth, who is certainly one of the best of the English translators, had always been as scrupulous in retrenching the ideas of his author, as we might have expected from his censure of Mr Pope. Cicero thus superscribes one of his letters : *M. T. C. Terentia, et Pater suavissimæ filiæ Tulliolæ, Ciccro matri et sorori S. D.* (Ep. Fam. l. 14. ep. 18.) And

and another in this manner: *Tullius Terentia, et Pater Tulliolæ, duabus animis suis, et Cicero Matri optimæ, suavissimæ sorori.* (Lib. 14. ep. 14.) Why are these addresses entirely sunk in the translation, and a naked title poorly substituted for them, “To Terentia and Tullia,” and “To the same?” The addresses to these letters give them their highest value, as they mark the warmth of the author’s heart, and the strength of his conjugal and paternal affections.

In one of Pliny’s Epistles, speaking of Regulus, he says, *Ut ipse mihi dixerit quum consuleret, quam citè sestertium sexcenties impleturus esset, invenisse se exta duplicata, quibus portendi millies et ducenties habiturum,* (Plin. Ep. 1. 2. ep. 20.) Thus translated by Melmoth: “That he once told me, upon consulting the omens, to know how soon he should be worth sixty millions of sestertes, he found them so favourable to him as to portend that he should possess double that sum.” Here a material part of the original idea is omitted; no less than that very circumstance upon which

the omen turned, viz. that the entrails of the victim were double.

CLAUDIAN thus describes a romantic solitude on the sea-coast, near Marseilles, which was feigned to be haunted by spirits :

*Est locus extremum pandit qua Gallia littus  
Oceani praetentus aquis, qua fertur Ulysses  
Sanguine libato populum morisse silentum :  
Illi umbrarum tenui stridore volantum  
Flebilis auditur questus ; simulacra coloni  
Pallida, defunctasque vident migrare figuræ.*

CLAUD. *In Ruf. l. 1.*

Thus translated by Mr Addison :

A place there lies on Gallia's utmost bounds,  
Where rising seas insult the frontier grounds :  
Ulysses here the blood of victims shed,  
And rais'd the pale assembly of the dead :  
Oft in the winds is heard a plaintive sound  
Of melancholy ghosts that hover round ;  
The lab'ring plowman oft with horror spies  
Thin airy shapes, that o'er the furrows rise,  
A dreadful scene ! and skim before his eyes.

}

*Remarks on several parts of Italy.*

THIS translation, on the whole, has much merit ; and the latter part, “ *The lab’ring plowman,*” &c. perhaps improves on the beauty of the original : but one circumstance eminently characteristic, is very imperfectly conveyed, *tenui stridore volantū* ; the faint rushing sound of the spirits in their flight.

ANALOGOUS to the liberty of adding to or retrenching from the ideas of the original, is the privilege which a translator may assume of correcting what appears to him a careless or inaccurate expression of the original, where that inaccuracy seems materially to affect the sense. Tacitus says, when Tiberius was entreated to take upon him the government of the empire, *Ille varie disserebat, de magnitudine imperii, suā modestiā.* An. l. l. c. 11. Here the word *modestia* is improperly applied. The author could not mean to say, that Tiberius discoursed to the people about his own modesty. He wished that his discourse should seem to proceed from modesty ; but he did not talk to them about his modesty. D’Alembert saw this

impropriety, and he has therefore well translated the passage: ‘Il répondit par des “discours généraux sur son peu de talent, “et sur la grandeur de l’empire.”

A similar impropriety, not indeed affecting the sense, but offending against the dignity of the narrative, occurs in that passage where Tacitus relates, that Augustus, in the decline of life, after the death of Drusus, appointed his son Germanicus to the command of eight legions on the Rhine, *At, hercule, Germanium Druso ortum octo apud Rhenum legionibus impasuit, An. l. l. c. 8.* There was no occasion here for the historian swearing; and though, to render the passage with strict fidelity, an English translator must have said, “Augustus, Egad, gave Germanicus, the son of Drusus, the command of eight legions on the Rhine,” we can not hesitate to say, that the simple fact is better announced without such embellishment.

It may be stated as a general observation, that the nature of the work ought to regu-

late the conduct of the translator with regard to the strictness he must observe, or the liberties he may use with his original. Works which consist of fact and detail demand a more scrupulous fidelity than those of which the basis is sentiment.

WE have very little of professed translation from the pen of Justus Lipsius, except some small portions of Polybius, which were necessary for illustrating his own Treatise on the *Roman Art of War*. These passages are rendered into Latin with the most exact conformity to the original text ; the writer justly remarking, that in interpreting those parts of an ancient author which treat of controverted facts, or contain descriptions that admit of different opinions, even the change of a single word may be of consequence : *cum de re agitur, verbum additum aut omissum, aut laxius etiam redditum, magnas facit vel mutationes, vel errationes.* That the same learned writer judged so scrupulous a fidelity by no means requisite in the exercise of the usual duty of a translator, we learn from the advice he gives to

a friend, who was then engaged in translating the Treatise *De Constantia* (a work of Lipsius) into German. This advice, which, though given in the writer's quaint manner, is equally the result of a sound judgment and a just taste, is applicable to all works of which sentiment and eloquence are the basis, rather than fact or narration: “*Constantiam nostram—vertis. Vidi specimen et probo. Illud tamen vellem, plus aliquid tibi permetteres, nec vestigia usquequaque sermonis Latinī premeres pede tam certo. Arcta per hanc curam versio, astricta, tenuis, sæpe obscura. Est suus videlicet cuique linguae genius, quem non avelas, nec temere migrare jussaris in corpus alienum. Quād multa Latinē breviter scripserim; quæ si totidem verbis transferas, sententia nec plana satis, nec plena sit! Quād multa rectè et altè, quæ in aliâ lingua jaceant, aut vacillent! Quod iis præsertim evenit, quorum stilus paullò magis ab eruditione habet et a curâ. Jam allusiones illas annotationes, flexus, et in uno sæpè verbo imagines, quæ tam dextra mens vertat, ut eadem vis iis aut Venus? Exorbita igitur: et hoc*

*erit rectam in vertendo viam tenere, viam non tenere.*

But if such was Lipsius's opinion of the freedom which ought to be allowed, and is even required in the translation of a rhetorical composition, we have seen, that both by his precept and example, he disapproved of all amplification in works of an historical nature, *cum de re agitur*. It is indeed much to be regretted, when works of this kind fall, by unlucky chance, into the hands of a pedantic translator, who piques himself on his talent for elegant embellishment. In the Latin version by Bartolomæus Facius of Arrian's History of the Expedition of Alexander, the original work, which in the simplicity of the narrative rivals the composition of Xenophon or Cæsar, is in a thousand instances miserably disfigured by the impertinent amplifications and rhetorical ornaments of the translator. I shall give a single specimen, which is noticed in the Preface by Vulcanius to Henry Stephen's edition of Arrian, 1575. The Greek author, mentioning the false report of Alex-

ander's death, in consequence of a wound received in fighting against the Malli, and the effect which that report had upon the Grecian army, says,

Καὶ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα οἰμογύνη ἦν τῆς σραῖᾶς ξυρτάσης, ἄλλες ἄλλη παραδίδοῦσι τὸν Φέρμανον πατεράμενοι δε τῆς ἀμαργυς, ἀλυμοι τε καὶ ἄποροι θεῶν, ὅσιες μὲν ἐξηγεμενος ἦσαν τῆς σραῖᾶς, (τολλος γὰρ δὲ οὐ τὸν τὰ τῆς ἀξιώσας ἴδοις πρὸς τε ἀντεθλεξάνδρες καὶ πρὸς Μακεδόνας καθιστηκαν).

“ At first there was a general voice of lamentation through the whole army ; each man conveying the disastrous intelligence to his neighbour : but when that lamentation abated, all became anxious and doubtful who should be the proper person to take the chief command : (for there were several officers who, in the judgment both of the Macedonians and of Alexander himself, seemed to be equally deserving of that important charge). ” Such is the literal sense of the passage : let us now observe how it is rendered by Facius. *Ac primū quidem ejulatus ac fremitus totis*

*castris fuit, regis sui fortunam deplorantium : Tantum imperatorem ac ducem, in tanto ætatis flore, tantisque rebus gestis, in ipso rerum cardine, quum is totum orbem terrarum imperio suo subjecturus videretur, sibi immatura morte ereptum. Invidisse Deos felicitati ejus, qui invictum per tot gentes regem, atque omnibus terris formidabilem, et Deo quam mortali similiorem, è vita sustulissent. Deinde ad se conversi, sortem suam deplorare ac lamentari, animi simul et consilii inopes, quisnam tanti exercitus dux, posthac futurus esset, inter se mæsti requirebant. Plerique rem Alexandri et Macedonum in æquo ponebant.* In this piece of splendid declamation, which must have been allowed the praise of eloquence, if it had appeared in the speech of an orator, the translator is guilty of three egregious faults : He has mutilated in one part his author's sense; for *Ἄλλον ἄλλῳ παραδίδοντος τὴν φήμην* is not translated at all : he has, in the last clause of the sentence, mistaken the author's meaning, in the words, *πολλοῖς γὰρ δὴ οἱ ισω τῆς ἀξιωσεως, &c.*; and he has, through the whole, introduced a variety of additional ideas, and reflections political and moral, re-

garding the fortunes and fate of Alexander, of which there is not a trace in the original ; thus interpolating, disfiguring and disguising his author, and utterly departing from his style and manner, so as scarcely to leave a resemblance between the copy and its prototype,



## CHAP. IV.

*Of the freedom allowed in Poetical Translation.—Progress of Poetical Translation in England.—B. Johnson, Holiday, Sandys, Fanshaw, Dryden.—Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse.—Pope's Homer.*

In the preceding chapter, in treating of the liberty assumed by translators, of adding to, or retrenching from the ideas of the original, several examples have been given, where that liberty has been assumed with propriety both in prose composition and in poetry. In the latter, it is more peculiarly allowable: “I “conceive it,” says Sir John Denham, “a vulgar “gar error in translating poets, to affect be- “ing fidus interpres. Let that care be with “them who deal in matters of fact or mat-

“ ters of faith ; but whosoever aims at it  
“ in poetry, as he attempts at what is not  
“ required, so shall he never perform what he  
“ attempts ; for it is not his business alone  
“ to translate language into language, but  
“ poesie into poesie ; and poesie is of so  
“ subtle a spirit, that in pouring out of one  
“ language into another, it will all evapo-  
“ rate ; and if a new spirit is not added in  
“ the transfusion, there will remain nothing  
“ but a *caput mortuum.*” *Denham’s Preface to the 2d book of Virgil’s Æneid.*

IN poetical translation, the English writers of the 16th, and the greatest part of the 17th century, seem to have had no other care than (in Denham’s phrase) to translate language into language, and to have placed their whole merit in presenting a literal and servile transcript of their original.

BEN JOHNSON, in his translation of Horace’s *Art of Poetry*, has paid no attention to the judicious precept of the very poem he was translating :

*Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus  
Interpres.*

Witness the following specimens, which will strongly illustrate Denham's judicious observations.

— Mortalia facta pieribunt;  
Nedum sermonum stet honos et gratia vivax.  
Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere, cadentque  
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,  
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.

*De Art. Poet.*

— All mortal deeds  
Shall perish; so far off it is the state  
Or grace of speech should hope a lasting date.  
Much phrase that now is dead shall be reviv'd,  
And much shall die that now is nobly liv'd,  
If custom please, at whose disposing will  
The power and rule of speaking resteth still.

B. JOHNSON.

*Inderum tamen et vocem Comædia tollit,  
Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore;  
Et Tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.  
Telephus et Peleus, cùm pauper et exul uterque,  
Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,  
Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.*

Yet sometime doth the Comedy excite,  
 Her voice, and angry Chremes chafes outright,  
 With swelling throat, and oft the tragic wight  
 Complains in humble phrase. Both Telephus  
 And Peleus, if they seek to heart-strike us,  
 That are spectators, with their misery,  
 When they are poor and banish'd, must throw by  
 Their bombard-phrase, and foot-and-half-foot words.

B. JOHNSON.

So, in B. Johnson's translations from the Odes and Epodes of Horace, besides the most servile adherence to the words, even the measure of the original is imitated.

Non me Lucrina juverint conchylia,  
 Magisve rhombus, aut scari,  
 Si quos Eois intonata fluctibus  
 Hyems ad hoc vertat mare :  
 Non Afra avis descendat in ventrem meum,  
 Non attagen Ionicus.  
 Jucundior, quam lecta de pinguissimis  
 Oliva ramis arborum ;  
 Aut herba lapathi prata amantis, et gravi  
 Malvae salubres corpori.

HOR. *Epod. 2.*

Not Lucrine ~~oystare~~ could thine more prize,  
 Nor turbot; nor bright golden eyes;  
 If with east floods the winter troubled much  
 Into our seas send any such;  
 The Ionian godwit, nor the ginnie-hen  
 Could not go down my belly then;  
 More sweet than olives that new-gather'd be,  
 From fattest branches of the tree,  
 Or the herb sortèl that loves meadows still,  
 Or mallows loosing bodies ill.

B. JOHNSON.

Or the same character for rigid fidelity; is the translation of Juvenal by Holiday, a writer of great learning, and even of critical acuteness, as the excellent commentary on his author fully shews.

*Omnibus in terris quae sunt a Gadibus atque  
 Auroram et Gangem pauci dignoscere possunt  
 Vera bona, atque illis maliunti diversa, rebibit  
 Erroris nebula. Quid enim radiare temeratus,  
 Aut cupimus? quid tam dextra pede principia, ut te  
 Compte non parvient, valique poracti.  
 Evertere domos totas oplantibus ipsis  
 Dii faciles.*

Juv. Sat. 10.

In all the world which between Cadiz lies  
And eastern Ganges, few there are so wise  
To know true good from feign'd, without all mist  
Of Error. For by Reason's rule what is't  
We fear or wish? What is't we e'er begun  
With foot so right, but we dislik'd it done?  
Whole houses th' easie gods have overthrown  
At their fond prayers that did the houses own.

*HOLIDAY'S JOURNAL.*

THERE were, however, even in that age, some writers who manifested a better taste in poetical translation. May, in his translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and Sandys, in his *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, while they strictly adhered to the sense of their authors, and generally rendered line for line, have given to their versions both an ease of expression and a harmony of numbers, which make them approach very near to original composition. The reason is, they have disdained to confine themselves to a literal interpretation, but have every where adapted their expression to the idiom of the language in which they wrote.

THE following passage will give no unfavourable idea of the style and manner of May. In the 9th book of the Pharsalia, Cæsar, when in Asia, is led from curiosity to visit the Plain of Troy.

Here fruitless trees, old oaks with putrefy'd  
And sapless roots, the Trojan houses hide,  
And temples of their Gods; all Troy's o'erspread  
With bushes thick, her ruines ruined.  
  
He sees the bridall grove Anchises lodg'd;  
Hesione's rock; the cave where Paris judg'd;  
Where nymph Oenone play'd; the place so fam'd  
For Ganymedes' rape; each stone is nam'd.  
  
A little gliding stream, which Xanthus was,  
Unknown he past, and in the lofty grass  
Securely trod; a Phrygian straight forbid  
Him tread on Hector's dust! (with ruins hid,  
The stone retain'd no sacred memory.)  
  
Respect you not great Hector's tomb, quoth he!  
—O great and sacred work of poesy,  
That free'st from fate, and giv'st eternity  
To mortal wights! But Cæsar, envy not  
Their living names, if Roman Muses aught  
May promise thee, while Homer's honoured  
By future times, shall thou, and I, be read;

No age shall us with darke oblivion staine,

But our Pharsalia eyer shall resaine,

Markus Lycan, b. 9.

— Jam silvae steriles, et putres robore trunci  
 Assaraci pressere domos, et templa deorum  
 Jam lassæ radice tenent: ac tota teguntur  
 Pergama dumetis; etiam periere ruine.  
 Aspiceit Hesiones scopulos, silvasque latentes  
 Anchiseæ thalamos; quo jadex sederit antro;  
 Unde puer raptus ecclœ; quo vertice Nais  
 Luserit Oenone: nullum est sine nomine saxum.  
 Ibisctus in sicco serpentem pulvere rivum  
 Transierat; qui Xanthus erat; securus in alto  
 Gramine ponebat gressus: Rhrysæ incola manes  
 Hectoreos talcære vetat: discutens: jacebant  
 Saxa, nec tillius faciem servantia sacri:  
 Hectoreas, monstrator ait, non respicis aras?  
 O sacer, et magnas vatum labor; omnia fatig  
 Eripis, et popillis donas mortibus sevum!  
 Invidia sacrae, Cæsar, ne tangere famæ:  
 Nam siquid Latiss fas est promittere Musis,  
 Quantum Strymei durabent vatis honores,  
 Venturi me teque legent: Pharsalia nostra  
 Vivet, et valllo tenebris amarabitur aeva.

INDEPENDENTLY of the excellence of the above translation, in completely conveying the sense, the force, and spirit of the original, it possesses one beauty which the more modern English poets have entirely neglected, or rather purposely banished from their versification in rhyme; I mean the varied harmony of the measure, which arises from changing the place of the pauses. In the modern heroic rhyme, the pause is almost invariably found at the end of a couplet. In the older poetry, the sense is continued from one couplet to another, and closes in various parts of the line, according to the poet's choice, and the completion of his meaning:

A little gliding stream, which Xanthus was,  
Unknown he past—and in the lofty grass  
Securely trod—a Phrygian straight forbid  
Him tread on Hector's dust—with ruins hid,  
The stone retain'd no sacred memory.

He must be greatly deficient in a musical ear, who does not prefer the varied har-

mony of the above lines to the uniform return of sound, and chiming measure of the following :

Here all that does of Xanthus stream remain,  
Creeps a small brook along the dusty plain.  
While careless and securely on they pass,  
The Phrygian guide forbids to press the grass ;  
This place, he said, for ever sacred keep,  
For here the sacred bones of Hector sleep :  
Then warns him to observe, where rudely cast,  
Disjointed stones lay broken and defac'd.

ROWE'S *Lucan*.

YET the *Pharsalia* by Rowe is, on the whole, one of the best of the modern translations of the classics. Though sometimes diffuse and paraphrastical, it is in general faithful to the sense of the original ; the language is animated, the verse correct and melodious ; and when we consider the extent of the work, it is not unjustly characterised by Dr Johnson, as one of “ the greatest productions of English poetry.”

Or similar character to the versification of May, though sometimes more harsh in its structure, is the poetry of Sandys :

There's no Alcyone ! none, none ! she died  
 Together with her Ceyx. Silent be  
 All sounds of comfort. These, these eyes did see  
 'My shipwreck'd Lord. I knew him ; and my hands  
 Thrust forth t' have held him : but no mortal bands  
 Could force his stay. A ghost ! yet manifest,  
 My husband's ghost : which, Oh, but ill express'd  
 His forme and beautie, late divinely rare !  
 Now pale and naked, with yet dropping haire :  
 Here stood the miserable ! in this place :  
 Here, here ! (and sought his aerie steps to trace).

SANDYS' Ovid, b. 11.

*Nulla est Alcyone, nulla est, ait ; occidit una  
 Cum Ceyce suo ; solantia tollite verba :  
 Naufragus interiit ; vidi agnoscere, manusque  
 Ad discedentem, cupiens retinere, tetendi.  
 Umbra fuit : sed et umbra tamen manifesta, virique  
 Vera mei ; non ille quidem, si queris, habebat  
 Assuetos vultus, nec quo prius ore nitebat.  
 Pallentem, nudumque, et adhuc humente capillo,*

*Infelix vidi: stetit hac miserabilis ipso*

*Eoce loqu: (et querit vestigia, si quis supersint.)*

*Metam. L. 11.*

In the above example, the *solantia tollite verba* is translated with peculiar felicity, “ Silent be all sounds of comfort ;” as are these words, *Nec quo prius ore nitebat*, “ Which, oh ! but ill express’d his forme and beautie.” “ No mortal bands could force his stay,” has no strictly corresponding sentiment in the original. It is a happy amplification ; which shews that Sandys knew what freedom was allowed to a poetical translator, and could avail himself of it.

From the time of Sandys, who published his translation of the Metamorphoses of Ovid, in 1626, there does not appear to have been much improvement in the art of translating poetry till the age of Dryden \* :

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\* In the poetical works of Milton, we find many noble imitations of detached passages of the ancient classics ; but there is nothing that can be termed a translation, unless an

for though Sir John Denham has thought proper to pay a high compliment to Fanshaw on his translation of the *Pastor Fido*, terming him the inventor of "a new and " nobler way \*" of translation, we find nothing in that performance which should entitle it to more praise than the *Metamorphoses* by Sandys, and the *Pharsalia* by May †.

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English version of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha; which it is probable the author meant as a whimsical experiment of the effect of a strict conformity in English both to the expression and measure of the Latin. See this singular composition in the Appendix, NO. 2.

- That servile path thou nobly dost decline,  
Of tracing word by word, and line by line.  
A new and nobler way thou dost pursue,  
To make translations and translators too :  
They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame;  
True to his sense, but truer to his fame.

DENHAM to SIR R. FANSHAW,

\* One of the best passages of Fanshaw's translation of the *Pastor Fido*, is the celebrated apostrophe to Spring;

BUT it was to Dryden that poetical translation owed a complete emancipation from her fetters ; and exulting in her new liberty, the danger now was, that she should run

---

Spring, the year's youth, fair mother of new flowers,  
New leaves, new loves, *drawn by the winged hours*,  
Thou art return'd ; but the felicity  
Thou brought'st me last is not return'd with thee.  
Thou art return'd ; but nought returns with thee,  
Save my lost joy's regretful memory.  
Thou art the self-same thing thou wert before,  
As fair and jocund : but I am no more  
The thing I was, so gracious in her sight,  
*Who is heaven's masterpiece and earth's delight.*  
O bitter sweets of love ! far worse it is  
To lose than never to have tasted bliss,

O Primavera gioventu del anno,  
Bella madre di fiori,  
D'herbe novelle, e di novelli amori :  
Tu torni ben, ma teco,  
Non tornano i sereni  
E fortunati di de le mie gioie !  
Tu torni ben, tu torni,  
Ma teco altro non torna  
Che del perduto mio caro tesoro  
La rimembranza misera e dolente,

into the extreme of licentiousness. The followers of Dryden saw nothing so much to be emulated in his translations as the ease of his poetry : Fidelity was but a secondary object, and translation for a while was considered as synonymous with paraphrase. A judicious spirit of criticism was now wanting, to prescribe bounds to this increasing licence, and to determine to what precise degree a poetical translator might assume to himself the character of an original writer. In that design, Roscommon wrote his *Essay on Translated Verse* ; in

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Tu quella se' tu quella,  
Ch'eri pur diansi vexzosa e bella.  
Ma non son io già quel ch'un tempo fui,  
Si caro a gli occhi altrui.  
O dolcezze amarissime d'amore !  
Quanto è più duro perdervi, che mai  
Non v'haver ò provate, ò possedute !

*Pastor Fido, act 3. sc. 1.*

In those parts of the English version which are marked in Italics, there is some attempt towards a freedom of translation ; but it is a freedom of which Sandys and May had long before given many happier specimens.

which, in general, he has shewn great critical judgment; but proceeding, as all reformers, with rigour, he has, amidst many excellent precepts on the subject, laid down one rule, which every true poet (and such only should attempt to translate a poet) must consider as a very prejudicial restraint. After judiciously recommending to the translator, first to possess himself of the sense and meaning of his author, and then to imitate his manner and style, he thus prescribes a general rule,

Your author always will the best advise;  
Fall when he falls, and when he rises, rise.

FAR from adopting the former part of this maxim, I conceive it to be the duty of a poetical translator, never to suffer his original to fall \*. He must maintain with him

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\* I am aware, that a sense may be given to this precept of Roscommon, which will justify its propriety: "Let the elevation of the copy keep pace with that of the original, where the subject requires elevation of expression: let it imitate it likewise in plainness and simplicity, if such be

a perpetual contest of genius ; he must attend him in his highest flights, and soar, if he can, beyond him : and when he perceives, any time, a diminution of his powers, when he sees a drooping wing, he must raise him on his own pinions \*. Homer has been judged by the best critics to fall at times beneath himself, and to offend, by introducing low images and puerile allusions. Yet how admirably is this defect veiled over, or altogether removed, by his translator Pope. In the beginning of the 8th book

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“ the character which the sentiment requires.” I have no fault to find with the precept, if so qualified.

\* A very ingenuous critic, to whom I am indebted for a singularly able and candid review of this Essay in the European Magazine, for September and October 1798, has censured this opinion as allowing to translators a liberty of departing from that truth and fidelity of representation, which it is their first duty rigidly to observe. But in a subsequent part of the same criticism, it appears, that this difference of opinion is more a seeming than a real opposition of sentiment : and I am happy to find the opinion I have advanced on this head, sanctioned by so respectable an authority as that of M. Delille ; whose translation of the Georgics of Virgil, though censurable (as I shall remark) in a few particulars, is, on the whole, a very fine performance. “ Il faut etre quelquefois

of the Iliad, Jupiter is introduced in great majesty, calling a council of the gods, and giving them a solemn charge to observe a strict neutrality between the Greeks and Trojans :

Ἡὰς μὲν κροκόπετλος ἐκίδνατο τᾶσαν ἵπ' αἰαν·  
Ζεὺς δὲ θεῶν ἀγορὴν ποιήσατο τερπικέραυνος,  
Ἄχροτάτη κορυφῇ πολυδειράδος Οὐλύμπιον.  
Αὐτὸς δέ σφ' αγόρευε, θεοὶ δὲ ἀμα τάντης ἄκουον.

“ AURORA with her saffron robe had  
“ spread returning light upon the world,  
“ when Jove delighting-in-thunder sum-

“ supérieur à son original, précisément parce qu'on lui est  
“ très-inférieur.” *Delille Disc. Prelim. à la Trad. des  
Georgiques.* Of the same opinion is the elegant author of  
the poem on Translation :

Unless an author like a mistress warms,  
How shall *we hide his faults*, or taste his charms?  
How all his modest, latent beauties find;  
How trace each lovelier feature of the mind;  
*Soften each blemish*, and *each grace improve*,  
And treat him with the dignity of love?

FRANCILLIN.

“ moned a council of the gods upon the  
“ highest point of the many-headed Olym-  
“ pus; and while he thus harangued, all  
“ the immortals listened with deep atten-  
“ tion.” This is a very solemn opening; but the expectation of the reader is miserably disappointed by the harangue itself, of which I shall give a literal translation.

Κέκλυτέ μεν, πάντες τε θεοί, πᾶσαι τε θεῖαιναι,  
“Οφρέ τέτω, τά με θυμός ίνι σῆθεσσι κελεύει.  
Μήτε τις ἐν θήλαια θεὸς τόγε, μήτε τις ἄρσην  
Πειράτα διαπέρσαι ἴμὸν ἵπος· ἀλλ' ἄμα πάντες  
Αἰνᾶτ', ὅφρα τάχισα τελευτήσω τάδε ἔργα.  
Οὐ δὲ ἀν ἕγαν ἀπάντευθε θεῶν ἐδέλοιται νοήσω  
Ἐλθόντι, ή Τρέπεσσιν ἀρηγέμεν, ή Δαιασοῖσι,  
Πληγὰς ἐ κατα κοσμοι ἐλεύσεται Οὐλυμπόνδε.  
Η μιν ἐλὰν ρίψω ἵς Τάρταρον ἡγρόεντα,  
Τῆλε μαλλ', ἡχι βάθισον υπὸ χθονός ἵσι βέρεθρον,  
“Ενθα σιδήρειαι τετύλαι καὶ χάλκεος ὑδὸς,  
Τόσσον ἔνερθ' αἰδεω, ὅπον ἔραιος ἵσ' απὸ γαιής.  
Γιώστετ' ἔπειθ, ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτισος ἀπάντων.  
Εἰδ' αγε, πειρήσασθε θεοί, ἵνα ἔδετε πάντες,  
Σειρὴν χρυσάην ἐξ ἐρανόθεν κρεμάσαῖτες.  
Πάντες δὲ ἐξάπεισθε θεοί, πᾶσαι τε θεῖαιναι.  
‘Αλλ' εἰς ἀν μὲν ἔργυσαιτ' ἐξ ἐρανόθεν πεδίονδε

Ζῆνι οὐκανον μήσαρ', οὐδὲ εἰ μάλα τελλὰ πάρεστε.  
 Ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ ἵγαν πρόφρων ἐδίλοιμι ἵρυσσαι  
 Αὐτῇ καὶ γαῖῃ ἵρυσσαιμ', αὐτῇ τε θαλάσση  
 Σειρην μάν καὶ ἵπεται περὶ ρίον Οὐδλύμπειο  
 Δημοφίρην τὰ δέ καὶ αὗτα μετήρεα πάντα γένεστε.  
 Τόσσον ἵγαν περὶ τὸν θεόν, περὶ τὸν θεόν ἀνθρώπον·

“ Hear me, all ye gods and goddesses,  
 “ whilst I declare to you the dictates of  
 “ my inmost heart. Let neither male nor  
 “ female of the gods attempt to controvert  
 “ what I shall say; but let all submissively  
 “ assent, that I may speedily accomplish my  
 “ undertakings: for whoever of you shall  
 “ be found withdrawing to give aid either  
 “ to the Trojans or Greeks, shall return to  
 “ Olympus marked with dishonourable  
 “ wounds: or else I will seize him, and  
 “ hurl him down to gloomy Tartarus, where  
 “ there is a deep dungeon under the earth,  
 “ with gates of iron, and a threshold of  
 “ brass, as far below hell, as the earth is be-  
 “ low the heavens. Then he shall know  
 “ how much stronger I am than all the  
 “ other gods. But come now, Gods, and make

“ trial, that ye may all be convinced. Sus-  
“ pend a golden chain from heaven, and  
“ hang all by one end of it, with your whole  
“ weight, gods and goddesses together : you  
“ will never pull down from the heaven to  
“ the earth, me, Jupiter, the supreme coun-  
“ sellor, though you should strain with your  
“ utmost force. But when I choose to pull,  
“ I will raise you all, with the earth and  
“ sea together, and fastening the chain to  
“ the top of Olympus, will keep you all  
“ suspended at it. So much am I superior  
“ both to gods and men.”

Or, as the same speech is rendered in a similar strain of tame fidelity, with the addition only of metrical rhythm, by Cowper :

Gods ! goddesses ! inhabitants of heaven !  
Attend ; I make my secret purpose known.  
Let neither god nor goddess interpose  
My counsel to rescind, but with one heart  
Approve it, that it reach at once its end.  
Whom I shall mark soever from the rest  
Withdrawn, that he may Greeks or Trojans aid,  
Disgrace shall find him ; shamefully chastised  
He shall return to the Olympian height,  
Or I will hurl him deep into the gulphs

Of gloomy Tartarus, where hell shuts fast  
Her iron gates, and spreads her brazen floor,  
As far below the shades, as earth from heaven.  
There shall he learn how far I pass in might  
All others ; which if ye incline to doubt,  
Now prove me. Let ye down the golden chain  
From heaven, and at its nether links pull all,  
Both goddesses and gods. But me your king  
Supreme in wisdom, ye shall never draw  
To earth from heaven, toil adverse as ye may :  
Yet I, when once I shall be pleas'd to pull,  
The earth itself, itself the sea, and you  
Will lift with ease together, and will wind  
The chain around the spiry summit sharp,  
Of the Olympian, that all things upheav'd  
Shall hang in the mid heaven. So far do I  
Compared with all who live, transcend them all.

IT must be owned, that this speech is far beneath the dignity of the Thunderer ; that the braggart vaunting in the beginning of it is nauseous ; and that a mean and ludicrous picture is presented, by the whole group of gods and goddesses pulling at one end of a chain, and Jupiter at the other. To veil these defects in a translation, was

difficult \*; but to give any degree of dignity to this speech, required certainly most uncommon powers. Cowper, an excellent

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\* Witness the attempt of a translator of no ordinary ability.

Pulchra mari, crocea surgens in veste, per omnes  
Fundebat sese terras Aurora: deorum  
Summo concilium cœlo regnator habebat.  
Cuncta silent: Solio ex alto sic Jupiter orsus.

Huc aures cuncti, mentesque advertite vestras,  
Dique Deæque, loquar dura quæ fert corde voluntas,  
Dicta probate omnes; neve hinc præcidere quisquam  
Speret posse aliquid, seu mas seu foemina. Siquis  
Auxilio veniens, dura inter prælia, Troas  
Juverit, aut Danaos, foede remeabit Olympum  
Saucius: arreptumve obscura in Tartara longè  
Demittam ipse manu jaciens; immane barathrum  
Altè ubi sub terram vasto descendit hiatu,  
Orcum infra, quantum jacet infra sidera tellus:  
Ære solum, æterno ferri stant robore portæ.  
Quam cunctis melior sim Dñs, tam denique disset.  
Quin agite, atque meas jam nunc cognoscacite vires,  
Ingentem heic auro e solido religate catenam,  
Deinde manus cuncti validas adhibete, trahentes  
Ad terram: non ulla fuit vis tanta, laborque,

poet, it is plain from the foregoing specimen, has failed egregiously. Yet I am much mistaken, if Mr Pope has not happily succeeded. I shall take the passage from the beginning :

“ Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn,  
 “ Sprinkled with rosy light the dewy lawn,  
 “ When Jove convened the senate of the skies,  
 “ Where high Olympus’ cloudy tops arise,  
 “ The sire of Gods his awful silence broke,  
 “ The heavens attentive, trembled as he spoke.

“ Celestial states, immortal gods ! give ear ;  
 “ Hear our decree, and reverence what ye hear ;  
 “ The fix’d decree, which not all heaven can move ;  
 “ Thou, fate ! fulfil it ; and, ye powers ! approve !  
 “ What God but enters yon forbidden field,  
 “ Who yields assistance, or but wills to yield,  
 “ Back to the skies with shame he shall be driven,  
 “ Gash’d with dishonest wounds, the scorn of heaven ;

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Cœlesti qui sede Jovem deducere possit.

Ast ego vos, terramque et magni cœrula ponti  
 Stagna traham, dextra sitollens, et vertice Olympi  
 Suspendam : vultus pendebunt aère cuncta.

Tantum supra homines mea vis, et numina supra est.

*Ilias Lat. vers. appress. a Raymundo Cunighio, Rom. 1776.*

“ Or far, oh far, from steep Olympus thrown,  
“ Low in the dark Tartarean gulph shall groan ;  
“ With burning chains fix'd to the brazen floors,  
“ And lock'd by hell's inexorable doors ;  
“ As deep beneath th' infernal centre hurl'd,  
“ As from that centre to th' ethereal world.  
“ Let him who tempts me dread those dire abodes ;  
“ And know th' Almighty is the God of gods.  
“ League all your forces then, ye pow'rs above,  
“ Join all, and try th' omnipotence of Jove :  
“ Let down our golden everlasting chain,  
“ Whose strong embrace holds Heaven, and Earth, and  
“ Main :  
“ Strive all, of mortal and immortal birth,  
“ To drag by this, the Thunderer down to earth :  
“ Ye strive in vain ! If I but stretch this hand,  
“ I heave the gods, the ocean and the land ;  
“ I fix the chain to great Olympus' height,  
“ And the vast world hangs trembling in my sight !  
“ For such I reign, unbounded and above ;  
“ And such are men and gods, compar'd to Jove \* !”

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\* See a translation of this passage by Hobbes, in the true spirit of the *Ætnæs*. Appendix, No. 3.

It would be endless to point out all the instances in which Mr Pope has improved both upon the thought and expression of his original. We find frequently in Homer, amidst the most striking beauties, some circumstances introduced which diminish the merit of the thought or of the description. In such instances, the good taste of the translator invariably covers the defect of the original, and often converts it into an additional beauty. Thus, in the simile in the beginning of the 3d book, there is one circumstance which offends against good taste.

Εὗτ' ὄρεος πορφῆσις Νότος κατέχειν οὐκίχλην,  
Ποιμέσιν ἐπὶ φίλην, κλέπτη δὲ τε νυκτὸς αμείνω,  
Τὸ σσον τίς τ' ἐπιλεύσσει, ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ λᾶσιν ἵησιν  
‘Ως ἀρα των ὅποι ποσσὶ κονίσσαλος ἄρνυτ’ ἀελλῆς  
Ἐρχομένων· μάλα δῶκα διέπρησσον τεδίοιο.

“ As when the south wind pours a thick  
“ cloud upon the tops of the mountains,  
“ whose shade is unpleasant to the sheep-  
“ herds, but more commodious to the thief  
“ than the night itself, and when the gloom

“ is so intense, that one cannot see farther  
“ than he can throw a stone: So rose the  
“ dust under the feet of the Greeks march-  
“ ing silently to battle.”

WITH what superior taste has the translator heightened this simile, and exchanged the offending circumstance for a beauty. The fault is in the third line; *τοσσον τις τοι λιλιστοι*, &c. which is a mean idea, compared with that which Mr Pope has substituted in its stead:

“ Thus from his shaggy wings when Eurus sheds  
“ A night of vapours round the mountain-heads,  
“ Swift gliding mists the dusky fields invade,  
“ To thieves more grateful than the midnight shade;  
“ While scarce the swains their feeding flocks survey,  
“ Lost and confus'd amidst the thicken'd day:  
“ So wrapt in gath'ring dust the Grecian train,  
“ A moving cloud, swept on and hid the plain.”

IN the 9th book of the Iliad, v. 484. where Phœnix reminds Achilles of the care he had taken of him while an infant, one circumstance extremely mean, and even disgusting, is found in the original.

—————οὐδὲ δὴ σ' αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γυναῖκας καθιστας,  
Οὐψε τ' ἀστερις προτίμων, καὶ οἵτε ἐπινοχάν.  
Πολλάκις μοι κατέδεστος ἐπὶ στήθεσσι χιτῶνας,  
Οἴς αὐτοβελύζων ἐν ηπτίσῃ ἀλεγενῆ.

“ When I placed you on my knees, I filled  
“ you full with meat minced down, and  
“ gave you wine, which you often vomited  
“ upon my bosom, and stained my clothes,  
“ in your troublesome infancy.” The  
English reader certainly feels an obliga-  
tion to the translator for sinking altogether  
this nauseous image, which, instead of heigh-  
tening the picture, greatly debases it:

Thy infant breast a like affection show'd,  
Still in my arms, an ever pleasing load ;  
Or at my knee, by Phoenix would'st thou stand,  
No food was grateful but from Phoenix hand :  
I pass my watchings o'er thy helpless years,  
The tender labours, the compliant cares \*.

POPE.

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\* A similar instance of good taste occurs in the following translation of an epigram of Martial, where the indelicacy of

BUT even the highest beauties of the original receive additional lustre from this admirable translator.

the original is admirably corrected, and the sense at the same time is perfectly preserved :

*Vix fieri liber & mentiris, Maxime, non sis :*

*Sed fieri si sis, hac ratione potes.*

*Liber eris, nescire foris, si, Maxime, nolis :*

*Veientana tuam si domat utra sitim :*

*Si ridere potes visseri Chrysendeta Ciane :*

*Contentus nostrâ si potes esse togâ.*

*Si plebeia Venus gemino tibi vincitur asse :*

*Si tua non rectus tecta subire potes :*

*Hac tibi si vis est, si mentis tanta potes,*

*Liberior Partho vivere rege potes.*

MART. lib. 2. ep. 58.

Non, d'etre libre, cher Paulin,

Vous n'avez jamais eu l'envie ;

Entre nous, votre train de vie

N'en est point du tout le chemin.

Il vous faut grand'chere, bon'via,

Grand jeu, nombreuse compagnie,

Maitresse fringante et jolie,

Et robe du drap le plus fin.

A striking example of this kind has been remarked by Mr Melmoth\*. It is the translation of that picture in the end of the 8th book of the Iliad, which Eustathius esteemed the finest night-piece that could be found in poetry :

Ως δὲ ὅτε ἐν ἔρανῳ ἀστρα φασινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην,  
Φαίνεται ἀριστερά, ὅτε τὸ ἐπλευτον νένεμος αἰδηρός,  
Ἐπεὶ τὸ φανον πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρώτοις ἄχροι,  
Καὶ νάται ἔρανόθεν δὲ ἀρέτηρά γη ἀσπετος αἰδηρός,  
Πάντα δέ τοι ἀδίταις ἀστρα γέγηδε δέ τε φρένα τοιμήν.

“ As when in the heavens the stars appear  
“ gracefully around the moon, when eve-  
“ ry breath of air is hush'd ; when the high  
“ watch-towers, the hills, and woods, are  
“ distinctly seen ; when the sky appears

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Il faudroit aimer, au contraire,  
Vin commun, petit ordinaire,  
Habit simple, un ou deux amis ;  
Jamais de jeu, point d'Amarante :  
Voyez si le parti vous tente,  
La liberté n'est qu' à ce prix.

“ to open to the sight, and every con-  
“ stellation is visible, and when the shep-  
“ herd’s heart is delighted within him.”  
This is beautiful, even in the most literal  
prose ; but how nobly is the picture raised  
and improved by Mr Pope !

“ As when the moon, resplendent lamp of night,  
“ O’er heav’n’s clear azure spreads her *sacred light* :  
“ When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,  
“ *And not a cloud o’ercasts the solemn scene* ;  
“ Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
“ And stars unnumber’d gild the glowing pole :  
“ O’er the dark trees a yeller verdure shed,  
“ And tip with silver every mountain’s head :  
“ Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,  
“ *A flood of glory bursts from all the skies* :  
“ The conscious swains rejoicing in the sight,  
“ *Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light* \*.

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\* Thus likewise translated with great beauty of poetry,  
and sufficient fidelity to the original.

Ut lunam circa fulgent cum lucida pulchro  
Astra choro, nusquam cœlo dum nubila, nusquam  
Aërios turbant ventorum flamina campos ;  
Apparent speculae, nemoroso et vertice montes

THESE passages from Pope's Homer afford examples of a translator's improvement of his original, by a happy amplification and embellishment of his imagery, or by the judicious correction of defects ; but to fix the precise degree to which this amplification, this embellishment, and this liberty of correction, may extend, requires a great exertion of judgment. It may be useful to remark some instances of the want of this judgment.

IT is always a fault when the translator adds to the sentiment of the original author, what does not strictly accord with his characteristic mode of thinking, or expressing himself.

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Frondiferi et saltus ; latè se fulgidus æther  
Pandit in immensum, penitusque abstrusa remoto  
Signa polo produnt longè sese omnia ; gaudet  
Visa tuens, hæretqué immoto lumine pastor.

*Ilias Lat. vers. a Raym. Cunighio, Rom. 1776.*

Pone sub eurus nimbus penguin  
 Selis, in terra domibus negat;  
 Dulcè ridentem Lalagen amabo,  
 Dulcè loquentem.

Hor. Od. 22. 4. 1.

Thus translated by Roscommon :

The burning zone, the frozen isles,  
 Shall hear me sing of Celia's smiles ;  
 All cold, but in her breast, I will despise,  
 And dare all heat, but that in Celia's eyes.

THE witty ideas in the two last lines are foreign to the original ; and the addition of these is quite unjustifiable, as they belong to a quaint species of wit, of which the writings of Horace afford no example.

EQUALLY faulty, therefore, is Cowley's translation of a passage in the Ode to Pyrrha :

Qui semper vacuam, semper amabilem  
 Sperat, nescius auræ fallacis. ———

He sees thee gentle, fair, and gay,  
 And trusts the faithless April of thy May.

As is the same author's version of that passage, which is characterised by its beautiful simplicity :

— somnus agrestium —

Lenis virorum non humiles domos  
 Fastidit, umbrosamque ripam  
 Non zephyris agitata Tempe.

Hor. 2. 1.

Sleep is a god, too proud to wait on palaces,  
 And yet so humble too, as not to scorn  
 The meanest country cottages ;  
 This poppy grows among the corn.  
 The halcyon Sleep will never build his nest  
 In any stormy breast :  
 'Tis not enough that he does find  
 Clouds and darkness in their mind ;  
 Darkness but half his work will do,  
 'Tis not enough ; he must find quiet too.

HERE is a profusion of wit, and poetic imagery ; but the whole is quite opposite to the character of the original.

CONGREVE is guilty of a similar impropriety in translating.

Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum  
Soracte: nec jam sustineant onus  
Sylves laborantes.

*Horn. i. 9.*

Bless me, 'tis cold ! how chill the air !  
How naked does the world appear !  
Behold the mountain tops around,  
As if with fur of ermine crown'd :  
And lo ! how by degrees,  
The universal mantle hides the trees,  
In hoary flakes which downward fly,  
As if it were the autumn of the sky,  
Whose fall of leaf would theirs supply :  
Trembling, the groves sustain the weight, and bow,  
Like aged limbs which feebly go,  
Beneath a venerable head of snow.

No author of real genius is more censorious on this score than Dryden.

Obsidere alii telis angusta viarum  
Oppositi: stat ferri acies mucrone cortusco  
Stricta parata neci.

*Aeneis, ii. 322.*

Thus translated by Dryden :

To several posts their parties they divide,  
Some block the narrow streets, some scour the wide :  
The bold they kill, th' unwary they surprise ;  
Who fights finds death, and death finds him who flies.

Of these four lines, there are scarcely more than four words which are warranted by the original. “ Some block the narrow “ streets.” Even this is a faulty translation of *Obsidere alii telis angusta viarum* ; but it fails on the score of mutilation, not redundancy. The rest of the ideas which compose these four lines, are the original property of the translator ; and the antithetical witticism in the concluding line, is far beneath the chaste simplicity of Virgil.

THE same author, Virgil, in describing a pestilential disorder among the cattle, gives the following beautiful picture, which, as an ingenious writer justly remarks \*, has every excellence that can belong to descriptive poetry :

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\* Dr Beattie's Dissertation on Poetry and Music, p. 357.  
4to. edit.

Ecce autem duro fumans sub vomere taurus  
Concidit, et mixtum spumis vomit ore creorem,  
Extremosque ciet gemitus. It tristis arator,  
Moerentem abjungens fraterna morte juvencum,  
Atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra.

Which Mr Dryden thus translates :

The steer who to the yoke was bred to bow,  
(*Studious of tillage and the crooked plow*),  
Falls down and dies ; and dying, spews a flood  
Of foamy madness, mix'd with clotted blood.  
The clown, who, *cursing Providence, repines*,  
His mournful fellow from the team disjoint ;  
With many a groan *forsooth* his fruitless care,  
And in the unfinish'd furrow leaves the share.

“ I would appeal to the reader,” says Dr Beattie, “ whether, by debasing the charming simplicity of *It tristis arator* with his blasphemous paraphrase, Dryden has not destroyed the beauty of the passage.” He has undoubtedly, even although the translation had been otherwise faultless. But it is very far from being so. *Duro fumans sub vomere*, is not translated at all, and another idea is put in its place. *Extremosque ciet*

*gemitus*, a most striking part of the description, is likewise entirely omitted. “ Spews “ a flood,” is vulgar and nauseous ; and “ a “ flood of foamy madness” is nonsense. In short, the whole passage in the translation is a mass of error and impropriety \*.

THE simple expression, *Jam Procyon furit*, in Horace, 3. 29. is thus translated by the same author :

The Syrian star  
Barks from afar,  
And with his sultry breath infects the sky.

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\* A late translator of the Georgics thus renders the passage with equal fidelity and good taste :

At once the bullock falls beneath the yoke,  
Blood and mixt foam beneath his nostrils smoke :  
He groans his last : the melancholy swain  
Leaves the fixt plough amid th' unfurrow'd plain,  
And frees the lonely steer, whose mournful eye  
Beholds with fond regret a brother die.

*The Georgics of Virgil transl. by W. SOTHERBY.*

This *barking of a star* is a bad specimen of the music of the spheres. Dryden, from the fervour of his imagination, and the rapidity with which he composed, is frequently guilty of similar impropriety in his metaphorical language. Thus, in his version of Du Fresnoy, *de Arte Graphica*, he translates

Indolis ut vigor inde potens obstrictus hebescat,

“ Neither would I extinguish the *fire* of a  
“ *vein* which is lively and abundant.”

THE following passage in the second Georgic, as translated by Delille, is an example of vicious taste :

Ac, dum prima novis adolescit frondibus setas,  
Parcendum teneris : et dum se lætus ad auras  
Palmas agit, laxis per purum immissus habenis,  
Ipsa acies nondum falce tentanda.—

Quand ses premiers bourgeons s'empresseront d'éclore,  
Que l'acier rigoureux n'y touche point encore ;  
Même lorsque dans l'air, qu'il commence à braver,  
Le rejetton moins frêle ose enfin s'elever ;  
Pardonne à son audace en faveur de son age.—

The expression of the original is bold and figurative, *lætus ad auras, — laxis per purum immissus habenis*; but there is nothing that offends the chapest taste. The concluding line of the translation is disgustingly finical,

*Pardonne à son audace en faveur de son age,*

MR Pope's translation of the following passage of the Iliad, is censurable on a similar account:

Λαοὶ μὲν φθινύθεσι περὶ πτόλιν, αἰκύ τε τᾶχος,  
Μαρνάμενοι.

*Iliad, 6, 327.*

For thee great Ilion's guardian heroes fall,  
Till heaps of dead alone defend the wall.

Of this conceit, of dead men defending the walls of Troy, Mr Pope has the sole merit. The original, with grave simplicity, declares, that the people fell, fighting before the town, and around the walls \*.

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\* Fitzosborne's Letters, 43.

IN the translation of the two following lines from Ovid's Epistle of Sappho to Phaon, the same author has added a witticism, which is less reprehensible, because it accords with the usual manner of the poet whom he translates ; yet it cannot be termed an improvement of the original :

“ *Scribimus, et lachrymis oculi rorantur abortis,*

“ *Aspice, quām sit in hoc multa litura loco.*”

See, while I write, my words are lost in tears,  
The less my sense, the more my love appears.

POPE.

THE favourite English anacreontic “ *Bu-sy, curious, thirsty Fly,*” is thus translated in the *Carmina Quadragesimalia*, vol. ii. ; a collection which contains some pieces of high merit.

Picta auro, et nitidis variata coloribus alas,  
Musca, veni nostris hospes amica scyphis.  
Hospes eris, madidæ seu te moderatior uvæ  
Haustus, seu recreet plenior, hospes eris,  
Indulge geniali horæ, facilique Lyæo,  
Dum sœvum Lachesis tarda moratur opus.

Nam tua, devolvi præoops, brevis interit aetas,

Et nostra est parili præcipitata fugâ.

Non tamen est sortem cur indignemur inquam,

Virgilius periit, Virgiliique culex \*.

IN this version, which is not without merit, the superadded illustration in the last line, flowing naturally from the sentiment of the original, is no more than what is allowable in poetical translation; but I doubt if it is an improvement. Sure I am, at least, that *Dum sævum Lachesis tarda moratur opus*, though likewise consonant to the sentiment of the original, has no propriety

\* Busy, curious, thirsty fly,  
Drink with me, and drink as I ;  
Freely welcome to my cup,  
Couldst thou sip, and sip it up ;  
Make the most of life you may ;  
Life is short, and wears away :

Both alike, both thine and mine,  
Hasten quick to their decline ;  
Thine's a summer, mine's no more,  
Though repeated to threescore :  
Threescore summers, when they're gone,  
Will appear as short as one.

when applied to the short life of *a fly*. In the version of the same anacreontic by Vincent Bourne, the translator, with better taste, has adhered to the chastened simplicity of the original, without any attempt at embellishment :

Potare, musca, de meo aut quovis scypho,  
Vocata, non vocata, præsens advena ;  
Lubens, libensque curiosam exple sitim,  
Siccare totum, si valebis poculum :  
~~E~~vi fugacis punctulum carpe, arripe ;  
~~E~~vi, quod interire pergit indies.

Utriusque vita properat, et tua et mea,  
Ad exitum cursu incitato vergere ;  
~~E~~stas tue, nec amplius spatiū est messe,  
Ad bis tricenas usque si reddit vices :  
Cūm præteribit bis tricena, sicuti  
Unius æstatis videbitur fuga.

BUT if authors, even of taste and genius, be found at times to have made an injudicious use of that liberty which is allowed in the translation of poetry, we must expect to see it miserably abused indeed, where those talents are evidently wanting. The following specimen of a Latin version of the *Paradise Lost*, is an example of every

thing that is vicious and offensive in poetical translation.

Primevi cano *furia* patris, *furta*que secutæ  
*Tristia* *fata* *necis*, labes ubi prima notavit  
 Quotquot Adameo genitos de sanguine vidi  
*Phæbus* *ad Hesperias* *ab Eoo* *cardine* *metas* ;  
 Quos procul *auricomis* *Paradisi* depulit *hortis*.  
 Dira cupido attayum, *raptique* *injuria* *pomi* :  
 Terrigena donec meliorque et major Adamus,  
 Amissis meliora bonis, majora reduxit.  
 Quosque dedit morti *lignum* *inviolabile*, mortis  
 Unicus ille *alio* rapuit de limine *ligno*.  
 Terrenusque licet pereat *Paradisus*, at ejus  
 Munere *laxa* *patet* *Paradisi* *porta* *superni* :  
 Hæc cæstro stimulata novo mens pandere gestit.  
 Quis mihi monstrat iter ? Quis carbase nostra profundo-  
 Dirigat in dubio ?

GUL. HOGARI *Paradisus Amiensus*, l. 1.

How completely is Milton disguised in this translation ! His majesty exchanged for meanness, and his simplicity for bombast \*.

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\* It is amusing to observe the conceit of this author, and the compliment he imagines he pays to the taste of his patron in applauding this miserable composition : " Adeo tibi

THE preceding observations, though they principally regard the first general rule of translation, viz. that which enjoins a complete transfusion of the ideas and sentiments of the original work, have likewise a near connection with the second general rule, which I shall now proceed to consider.

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“ placuit, ut quædam etiam in melius mutasse tibi visus fne-  
“ rim.” With similar arrogance and absurdity, he gives Milton credit for the materials only of the poem, assuming to himself the whole merit of its structure: “ Miltonus Paradisum  
“ Amissum invenerat; ergo Miltoni hæc lapa est, at mea  
“ tela tamen.”



## CHAP. V.

*Second General Rule : The Style and Manner of writing in a Translation should be of the same Character with that of the Original.—Translations of the Scriptures ;—Of Homer, &c. ;—A just Taste requisite for the Discernment of the Characters of Style and Manner.—Examples of failure in this particular ;—The grave exchanged for the formal ;—The elevated for the bombast ;—The lively for the petulant ;—The simple for the childish. —Hobbes, L'Es-  
trange, Echard, &c.*

**N**EXT in importance to a faithful transfusion of the sense and meaning of an author, is an assimilation of the style and manner of writing in the translation to that of the original. This requisite of a good transla-

tion, though but secondary in importance, is more difficult to be attained than the former; for the qualities requisite for justly discerning and happily imitating the various characters of style and manner, are much more rare than the ability of simply understanding an author's sense. A good translator must be able to discover at once the true character of his author's style. He must ascertain with precision to what class it belongs; whether to that of the grave, the elevated, the easy, the lively, the florid and ornamented, or the simple and unaffected; and these characteristic qualities he must have the capacity of rendering equally conspicuous in the translation as in the original. If a translator fail in this discernment, and want this capacity, let him be ever so thoroughly master of the sense of his author, he will present him through a distorting medium, or exhibit him often in a garb that is unsuitable to his character.

THE chief characteristic of the historical style of the Sacred Scriptures, is its simplicity. This character belongs indeed to the

language itself. Dr Campbell has justly remarked, that the Hebrew is a simple tongue; that "their verbs have not, like the Greek and Latin, a variety of moods and tenses, nor do they, like the modern languages, abound in auxiliaries and conjunctions. The consequence is, that in narrative, they express by several simple sentences, much in the way of the relations used in conversation, what in most other languages would be comprehended in one complex sentence of three or four members \*." The same author gives, as an example of this simplicity, the beginning of the first chapter of Genesis, where the account of the operations of the Creator on the first day is contained in eleven separate sentences. "1. In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. 2. And the earth was without form, and void. 3. And darkness was upon the face of the deep. 4. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 5. And God said, let there be

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\* Third Preliminary Dissertation to a New Translation of the Four Gospels.

“ light. 6. And there was light. 7. And  
“ God saw the light, that it was good. 8.  
“ And God divided the light from the  
“ darkness. 9. And God called the light  
“ day. 10. And the darkness he called  
“ night. 11. And the evening and the  
“ morning were the first day.” “ This,”  
says Dr Campbell, “ is a just representa-  
“ tion of the style of the original. A more  
“ perfect example of simplicity of struc-  
“ ture, we can no where find. The sen-  
“ tences are simple, the substantives are not  
“ attended by adjectives, nor the verbs by  
“ adverbs; no synonymas, no superlatives,  
“ no effort at expressing things in a bold,  
“ emphatical, or uncommon manner.”

CASTALIO's version of the Scriptures is entitled to the praise of elegant Latinity, and he is in general faithful to the sense of his original; but he has totally departed from its style and manner, by substituting the complex and florid composition to the simple and unadorned. His sentences are formed in long and intricate periods, in which many separate members are artfully

combined; and we observe a constant endeavour at a classical phraseology and ornamented diction \*. In Castalio's version of the foregoing passage of Genesis, nine sentences of the original are thrown into one period. 1. *Principio creavit Deus cælum et terram.* 2. *Quum autem esset terra iners atque rudis, tenebrisque effusum profundum, et divinus spiritus sese super aquas libraret, jussit Deus ut existeret lux, et extitit lux; quam quum videret Deus esse bonam, lucem secrevit a tenebris, et lucem diem, et tenebras noctem appellavit.* 3. *Ita extitit ex vespere et mane dies primus.*

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\* " His affectation of the manner of some of the poets and orators has metamorphosed the authors he interpreted, and stript them of the venerable signatures of antiquity, which so admirably befit them; and which, serving as intrinsic evidence of their authenticity, recommend their writings to the serious and judicious. Whereas, when accustomed in this new fashion, no body would imagine them to have been Hebrews; and yet, (as some critics have justly remarked), it has not been within the compass of Castalio's art, to make them look like Romans." Dr Campbell's 10th Prelim. Diss.

Dr BEATTIE has justly remarked, that the translation of the Old Testament by Castalio does great honour to that author's learning, but not to his taste. "The quaint-  
" ness of his Latin betrays a deplorable in-  
" attention to the simple majesty of his  
" original. In the Song of Solomon, he  
" has debased the magnificence of the lan-  
" guage and subject by *diminutives*, which,  
" though expressive of familiar endearment,  
" he should have known to be destitute of  
" dignity, and therefore improper on so-  
" lemn occasions."—" *Mea Columbula, oq-*  
" *tende mihi tuum vulticulum; fac ut au-*  
" *diam tuam voculam; nam et voculam ve-*  
" *nustulam, et vulticulum habes lepidulum.*—  
" *Veni in meos hortulos, sororcula mea spon-*  
" *sa.*—*Ego dormio, vigilante meo corcu-*  
" *lo \*;*" &c.

THE version of the Scriptures by Arias Montanus, is in some respects a contrast to that of Castalio. Arias, by adopting the li-

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• *Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition.*

teral mode of translation, probably intended to give as faithful a picture as he could, both of the sense and manner of the original. Not considering the different genius of the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin, in the various meaning and import of words of the same primary sense; the difference of combination and construction, and the peculiarity of idioms belonging to each tongue; he has treated the three languages as if they corresponded perfectly in all those particulars; and the consequence is, he has produced a composition which fails in every one requisite of a good translation: it conveys neither the sense of the original, nor its manner and style; and it abounds in barbarisms, solecisms, and grammatical inaccuracy \*. In Latin, two negatives make an affirmative; but it is otherwise in Greek, they only give force to the negation †: *χωρίς*;

II 2

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\* Dr Campbell, 10th Prel. Diss. part 2.

† The Greek language even admits of three negatives, with similar effect in strengthening the negation, as *Οὐδὲν*; *αὐτοῦ*; *οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ*.

*ipse o*n* d*omi*ne r*ati*o*n* s*er*u*m*, as translated by Arias, sine me non potestis facere nihil, is therefore directly contrary to the sense of the original: And surely that translator cannot be said either to do justice to the manner and style of his author, or to write with the ease of original composition, who, instead of perspicuous thought, expressed in pure, correct, and easy phraseology, gives us obscure and unintelligible sentiments, conveyed in barbarous terms and constructions, irreconcileable to the rules of the language in which he uses them. *Et nunc dixi vobis ante fieri, ut quum factum fuerit credatis.*—*Ascendit autem et Joseph a Galilaea in civitatem David, propter esse ipsum ex domo et familia David, describi cum Maria despensata sibi uxore, existente prægnante. Factum autem in esse eos ibi, impleti sunt dies parere ipsam.*—*Venerunt ad portam, quæ spontanea aperta est eis, et ex eundem processerunt vicum.*—*Nunquid aquam prohibere potest quis ad non baptizare hos?*—*Spectat descendens super se vas quoddam linteum, quatuor initii**

*vincitum.—Aperiens autem Petrus os, dixit : In veritate deprehendo quia non est personarum acceptor Deus\*.*

THE characteristic of the language of Homer is strength united with simplicity. He employs frequent images, allusions, and similes; but he very rarely uses metaphorical expression. The use of this style, therefore, in a translation of Homer, is an offence against the character of the original. Mr Pope, though not often, is sometimes char-

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\* The language of that ludicrous work, *Epistola obscurorum virorum*, is an imitation, and by no means an exaggerated picture of the style of Arias Montanus's version of the Scriptures. *Vos bene audivistis qualiter Papa habuit unum magnum animal quod vocatum fuit Elephas; et habuit ipsum in magno honore, et valde amavit illud. Nunc igitur debetis scire, quod, tale animal est mortuum. Et quando fuit infirmum, tunc Papa fuit in magna tristitia, et vocavit medicos plures, et dixit eis : Si est possibile, sanate mihi Elephas. Tunc fecerunt magnam diligentiam, et viderunt ei urinam, et dederunt ei unam purgationem quae constat quinque centum aureos, sed tamen non potuerunt Elephas facere merdare, et sic est mortuum; et Papa dolet multum super Elephas; quia fuit mirabile animal, habens longum rostrum in magna quantitate.—Ast ego non curabo ista mundana negotia, quae affectunt perditionem animas, Valete.*

geable with this fault ; as where he terms the arrows of Apollo "the feather'd fates," Iliad, 1. 68., a quiver of arrows, "a store of flying fates," Odyssey, 22. 136 : or instead of saying, that the soil is fertile in corn, "in wavy gold the summer vales are dress'd," Odyssey, 19. 131 \* ; the soldier wept, "from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew." Ibid. 11. 486.

VIRGIL, in describing the shipwreck of the Trojans, says,

*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto;*

Which the Abbé des Fontaines thus translates : "A peine un petit nombre de ceux qui montoient le vaisseau purent se sauver à la nage." Of this translation Voltaire justly remarks, "C'est traduire Virgile en style de gazette, Où est ce yaste

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\* It is well known, that the greater part of the Odysey was not translated by Pope himself, but by some assistants, whom he employed and paid for their labours ; but having revised the whole, and published the work under his own name, he is justly responsible for all its faults.

“ gouffre que peint le poète, gurgite vasto ?  
 “ Où est l’apparent rari nantes ? Ce n'est  
 “ pas ainsi qu'on doit traduire l'Eneide.”  
*Voltaire, Quest. sur l'Encyclop. mot Amplification.*

If we are thus justly offended at hearing Virgil speak in the style of the Evening Post or the Daily Advertiser, what must we think of the translator, who makes the solemn and sententious Tacitus express himself in the low cant of the streets, or in the dialect of the waiters of a tavern ?

*Facile Asinium et Messalam inter Antonium et Augustum bellorum præmiis refertos :* Thus translated in a version of Tacitus by Mr Dryden and several eminent hands : “ Asinius and Messala, who feathered their nests well in the civil wars 'twixt Anthony and Augustus.” *Vinolentiam et libidines usurpans :* “ Playing the good-fellow.” *Frustra Arminium præscribi :* “ Trumping up Arminius's title.” *Sed Agrippina libertam æmulam, nurum ancillam, aliaque eundem in modum muliebriter fremere :* “ But

“ Agrippina could not bear that a freed-  
“ woman should *nose* her.” And another  
translator says, “ But Agrippina could not  
“ bear that a freedwoman should *beard* her.”  
Of a similar character with this translation  
of Tacitus is a translation of Suetonius by  
several gentlemen of Oxford \*, which a-  
bounds with such elegancies as the follow-  
ing: *Sestio Gallo, libidinoso et prodigo seni* :  
“ *Sestius Gallus*, a most notorious old Sir  
“ *Jolly*.” *Jucundissimos et omnium horarum  
amicos* ; “ His boon companions and sure  
“ *cards*.” *Nullam unquam occasionem de-  
dit* : “ They never could pick the least hole  
“ in his coat.”—So likewise in a translation  
of Livy, *Samnites pro aris et focis pugna-  
bant* : “ The Samnites fought for church and  
“ chimney, as the saying is.”—And with  
equal elegance; *Quidam Lucanorum pretio  
asciti, clari magis quam honesti, quum cor-  
pora nuda intulissent*, &c: “ The Lucani-  
“ ans, a parcel of rascallions, ran away in  
“ *querpo*.”

JUNO's apostrophe to Troy, in her speech to the Gods in council, is thus translated in a version of Horace by "The Most Eminent hands."

————— *Ilion, Ilion,*  
*Fatalis incestusque judex, &c.*

HOR. 3. 3.

Q Ilion, Ilion, I with transport view  
 The fall of all thy wicked, perjur'd crew !  
 Pallas and I have *borne a rankling grudge*  
 To that *curst* Shepherd, that incestuous judge.

In the following passage of Juvenal's tenth Satire, the striking moral of the thought is most happily aided by the language in which it is clothed :

————— *nulla aconita bibuntur*  
*Fictilibus ; tunc illa times, quum pocula sumes*  
*Gemmata, et lato Setinum ardebit in auro.*

But how miserably is the sentiment debased by the expression in a modern translation :

—————yet no poisonous drug

Was ever swallow'd from an earthen mug :

When rich wine sparkles in the bowl superb,

With gold and gems, then fear the deadly herb.

OWEN'S *Jurnal*.

The description of the majesty of Jupiter, contained in the following passage of the first book of the Iliad, is allowed to be a true specimen of the sublime. It is the archetype from which Phidias acknowledged he had framed his divine sculpture of the Olympian Jupiter :

"Η, καὶ κνανέησιν ἵπ' ὄφεύσι: νῦντος Κρονίων.  
Ἄμβρόσιαι δὲ ἄρα χαῖται: ἵππράσαντο ἄνακτος,  
Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο, μόγαν δὲ λέλιξεν Ὁλυμπον."

He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows,  
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,  
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the God :  
High heav'n, with trembling, the dread signal took,  
And all Olympus to its centre shook.

POPE.

CERTAINLY Mr Hobbes of Malmesbury perceived no portion of that sublime which

was felt by Phidias and by Pope, when he could thus translate this fine description :

This said, with his black brows he to her nodded,  
Wherewith displayed were his locks divine ;  
Olympas shook at stirring of his godhead,  
And Thesis from it jump'd into the brine.

IN the translation of the Georgics, Mr Dryden has displayed great powers of poetry. But Dryden had little relish for the pathetic, and no comprehension of the natural language of the heart. The beautiful simplicity of the following passage has entirely escaped his observation, and he has been utterly insensible to its tenderness :

*Ipse caro solans negram testudine amorem,  
Te, dulcis conjux, te solo in littore secum,  
Te veniente die, te decedente canebit.*

VIRG. GEOR. 4.

Th' unhappy husband, husband now no more,

Did on his tuneful harp his loss deplore,

And sought his mournful mind with music to restore.

}

On thee, dear Wife, in deserts all alone,  
 He call'd, sigh'd; sung; his griefs with day begun,  
 Nor were they finish'd with the setting sun. }  
 }

The three verbs, *call'd* *sigh'd*, *sung*, are here substituted, with peculiar infelicity, for the repetition of the pronoun; a change which converts the pathetic into the ludicrous.

IN the same episode, the poet compares the complaint of Orpheus to the wailing of a nightingale, robb'd of her young, in those well known beautiful verses :

*Qualis populea martenis Philomela sub umbra  
 Amissos queritur factus, quos durus arator  
 Observans nido implumes, detraxit: at illa  
 Flei noctem, ramoque redens miserabile carmen  
 Integrat, et maestis late loca, questibus implet.*

Thus translated by Dryden :

So, close in poplar shades, her children gone,  
 The mother nightingale laments alone;  
 Whose nest some prying churl had found, and thence  
 By stealth, convey'd the feather'd innocence;

But she supplies the night with mournful strains,  
And melancholy music fills the plains.

How poor is this translation when compared with its original ; yet, on the whole, less censurable than the following version by a French poet of high reputation :

Telle sur un rameau durant la nuit obscure  
Philomele plaintive attendrit la nature,  
Accuse en gémissant l'oiseleur inhumain,  
Qui, glissant dans son nid une furtive main,  
Ravit ces tendres fruits que l'amour fit éclore,  
Et qu'un léger duvet ne couvroit pas encore.

DELILLE, *Georg. de Virg.*

IT is evident, that there is a complete evaporation of the beauties of the original in this translation : and the reason is, that the French poet has substituted sentiments for facts, and refinement for the simple pathetic. The nightingale of Delille melts all nature with her complaint ; accuses with her sighs the inhuman fowler, who glides his thievish hand into her nest, and plunders the tender fruits that were hatched by love ! How different this sentimental foppery from

the chaste simplicity of Virgil!—We perceive a similar vein of affected sentiment in the translation of the *Paradise Lost* by the same author:

So spake our general mother ; and with eyes  
 Of conjugal affection unreprov'd  
 And meek surrender, half embracing, lean'd  
 On our first father ; half her swelling breast  
 Naked met his, under the flowing gold  
 Of her loose tresses hid ; he in delight  
 Both of her beauty and submissive charms,  
 Smil'd with superior love.

*Sur Adam à ces mots, d'un air affectueux*  
*Elle jette un regard chaste et voluptueux,*  
*Tel qu'en permet l'Hymen, tel qu'amour en inspire :*  
*Le ciel qui la forma se peint dans son esprir.*  
*Le cœur sur son époux doucement appuyé,*  
*Ses bras respectueux l'entourent à moitié ;*  
*Et voilant à demi ce sein qu'il idolâtre*  
*Ses cheveux d'or flottent, sur sa gorge d'abître.*  
*Adam reste muet, il admire tout bas*  
*Un amour si soumis, de si chastes appas ;*  
*Et ses yeux rassurant la beauté qui l'embrasse*  
*Peignent la Majesté souriant à la grace.*

*Parad. Perd. L. iv.*

IN the beautiful story of Pyramus and Thisbe, Ovid describes in a single couplet, the death of Pyramus, in terms of the most affecting simplicity :

Ad nomen Thisbes, oculos jam morte gravatos  
Pyramus erexit, visque recondidit illi.

A FRENCH author of some reputation, has thus rendered the passage, accommodating it to the taste of his age and country :

C'est Pyrame ! c'est lui ! dormiroit-il, grands Dieux !  
Pyrame ! à cette voix Pyrame ouvre les yeux :  
“ Je croyois qu'aux enfers tu venois de descendre,  
“ Et que tu m'attendais—c'est moi qui vais t'attendre.”  
Il dit.—Son œil couvert du voile de la mort,  
Cherche Thisbe dans l'ombre, et la trouvant encor,  
Avec un doux effort longtems fixé sur elle,  
Se renferme et s'éteint dans la nuit éternelle.

*Lettres à Emilie par DEMOUTIER.*

We may affirm for certain, that the writer who could depart thus widely from the character of his original, had not the smallest feeling of that beautiful simplicity which characterizes it.

THE following passage in the 6th book of the Iliad has not been happily translated by Mr Pope. It is in the parting interview between Hector and Andromache.

“Ως εἰπὼν, ἀλόχροι φίλης ἵν χερσὶν ἔθηκε  
Πᾶιδ’ οἰον· ή δ’ ἄρα μιν πηδεῖ δίξατο πολτῶν,  
Δακρυόν γελάσασα· πόσις δ’ ἐλέησε νοήσας,  
Χειρὶ τε μιν κατέρεξεν, ἵπος τ’ ἔφατ’ ἐκ τ’ ὄνομαζε·

He spoke, and fondly gazing on her charms,  
Restor’d the pleasing burden to her arms ;  
Soft on her fragrant breast the babe she laid,  
Hush’d to repose, and with a smile survey’d.  
The troubled pleasure soon chastis’d by fear,  
She mingled with the smile a tender tear.  
The soften’d chief with kind compassion view’d,  
And dried the falling drops, and thus pursu’d.

THIS, it must be allowed, is good poetry ; but it wants the affecting simplicity of the original. *Fondly gazing on her charms—pleasing burden—The troubled pleasure soon chastised by fear*, are injudicious embellishments. The beautiful expression *Δακρυόν*,

*γιλασσα* is enfeebled by amplification ; and the fine circumstance, which so much heightens the tenderness of the picture, *Χειρι τε μιν κατερεξει*, is forgotten altogether.

In the same parting scene between Hector and Andromache, Pope has failed in many particulars :

*Book vi. l. 504.*

Silent the warrior smil'd, and pleas'd, resign'd  
To tender passions all his mighty mind.

This has nothing of the simplicity of the original, and does not fully express the picture given by Homer :

*Ητοι ο μεν μείδησεν ίδων οις παιδα σιωπῆ.*

*Book vi. l. 544.*

Yet while my Hector still survives, I see  
My father, mother, brethren, all in thee.

*Ἐπεορ, ἀταρ σὺ μοι ἴσσι παιήρ καὶ ποίνα μήτηρ,  
Ηδὶ κασσίγυνησ, σὺ δὲ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης.*

The translator has here unaccountably omitted the most energetic particular, which fills up the climax, *σὺ δέ μοι θαλαρὸς ταραχοίσης.*

*Book vi. l. 570.*

Yet come it will, the day decreed by fates,  
(How my heart trembles while my tongue relates.)

This last line is a poor and superfluous addition, merely to furnish out a rhyme. *Relates*, too, is improperly used for uttering a prophecy. The original has uncommon grandeur and emphasis :

Ἐψ μει γὰρ τόδε δίδα καὶ λα φέσιν καὶ καὶ λα τορές,  
Εσσιλ' ἡμαρ, ὅτ' ἀν τολ' ὀλώλη Ιλιος ιη, &c.

JOHNSON has thus beautifully discriminated the characteristic features of the two great Epics of Greece and Rome : “ In the “ comparison of Homer and Virgil, the dis- “ criminative excellence of Homer is ele- “ vation and comprehension of thought, and “ that of Virgil is grace and splendor of “ diction. The beauties of Homer are “ therefore difficult to be lost, and those of “ Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy

“ trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity ;  
 “ but the blossoms of elocution easily drop  
 “ away. The author having the choice of  
 “ his own images, selects those which he  
 “ can best adorn ; the translator must, at all  
 “ hazards, follow his original, and express  
 “ thoughts which perhaps he would not  
 “ have chosen.”

JOHNSON'S *Life of Dryden.*

IN the true, simple style of the Greek epigram is the following, on a miser, from the *Anthologia* ;

Μυρ' Ἀσκληπιάδης ὁ φιλάργυρος εἶδεν ἐν οἴκῳ,  
 Καὶ, τὶ τοιᾶς, φησίν, φίλατε μῦ, παρ' εμοι ;  
 Ἡδὺ δ' ὁ μῦς γελάσας, Μηδέν, φίλε, φησί, φοβοῦθης.  
 Οὐχὶ τροφῆς παρὰ σοὶ χρήζομεν, ἀλλὰ μονῆς.

A great part of the beauty of the above epigram depends on the singular brevity of expression in which the dialogue is given between the mouse and the miser.

COWPER has spun it out into ten heavy lines, without a spark of the spirit of the original :

A miser traversing his house,  
Espied, unusual there, a mouse,  
And thus his uninvited guest,  
Briskly inquisitive, address'd :  
“ Tell me, my dear, to what cause is it  
“ I owe this unexpected visit ?”  
The mouse her host obliquely eyed,  
And smiling, pleasantly replied,  
“ Fear not, good fellow, for your hoard ;  
“ I come to lodge, and not to board.”

The following version of the same epigram, if not altogether faithful, rivals the original at least in brevity :

To old Harpagon thus, lamenting his hap,  
A mouse whom the miser had caught in a trap :  
“ My life and my lodging I pray thee to spare ;  
“ As for victuals, I know, I must seek them elsewhere.”

BUT a translator may discern the general character of his author's style, and yet fail remarkably in the imitation of it. Unless he is possessed of the most correct taste, he will be in continual danger of presenting an exaggerated picture or a caricatura of his original. The distinction between good and bad writing is often of so very slender a na-

ture, and the shadowing of difference so extremely delicate, that a very nice perception alone can at all times define the limits. Thus, in the hands of some translators, who have discernment to perceive the general character of their author's style, but want this correctness of taste, the grave style of the original becomes heavy and formal in the translation ; the elevated swells into bombast, the lively froths up into the pe-tulant, and the simple and *naif* degenerates into the childish and insipid \*.

IN the fourth Oration against Catiline, Cicero, after drawing a most striking picture of the miseries of his country, on the supposition that success had crowned the de-

## F 3

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• ————— *Sectantem levia nervi*

*Deficiunt animique : professus grandia turget :*

*Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procella. —*

*In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.*

*Hoc. Ep. ad Pis.*

signs of the conspirators, closes the detail with this grave and solemn application :

*Quia mihi vehementer hæc videntur misera atque miseranda, idcirco in eos qui ea perficere voluerunt, me severum, vehementemque præbeo. Etenim quæro, si quis paterfamilias, liberis suis a servo interfectis, uxore occisâ, incensâ domo, supplicium de servô quam acerbissimum sumserit; utrum is clemens ac misericors, an inhumanissimus et crudelissimus esse videatur? Mihi verò importunus ac ferreus, qui non dolore ac cruciatu nocentis, suum dolorem ac cruciatum lenierit.*

How awkwardly is the dignified gravity of the original imitated, in the following heavy, formal, and insipid version.

“ Now as to me these calamities appear  
“ extremely shocking and deplorable: there-  
“ fore I am extremely keen and rigorous in  
“ punishing those who endeavoured to  
“ bring them about. For let me put the  
“ case, that a master of a family had his

“ children butchered, his wife murdered, his  
“ house burnt down by a slave, yet did not  
“ inflict the most rigorous of punishments  
“ imaginable upon that slave: would such  
“ a master appear merciful and compas-  
“ sionate, and not rather a monster of cruel-  
“ ty and inhumanity? To me that man  
“ would appear to be of a flinty cruel na-  
“ ture, who should not endeavour to soothe  
“ his own anguish and torment by the  
“ anguish and torment of its guilty cause\*.”

OVID, in describing the fatal storm in which Ceyx perished, says,

*Undarum incurru gravis unda, tonitribus aether  
Fluctibus erigitur, cælumque æquare videtur  
Pontus.—*

An hyperbole, allowable in poetical description; but which Dryden has exaggerated into the most outrageous bombast:

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\* The Orations of M. T. Cicero translated into English, with notes, historical and critical. Dublin 1766.

Now waves on waves ascending scale the skies,  
And in the fires above the water fries.

IN the first scene of the *Amphitryo* of Plautus, Sosia thus remarks on the unusual length of the night :

*Nequis ego hac nocte longiorem me vidisse censeo,  
Nisi item unam, verberatus quam pependi perpetem.  
Eam quoque, Ædepol, etiam multo hæc vicit longitudine.  
Credo euidem dormire solem atque appotum probe.  
Mira sunt, nisi invitavit sese in cœna plusculum.*

To which Mercury answers :

*Ain vero, verbero ? Deos esse tui similes putas ?  
Ego, Pol, te istis tuis pro dictis et malefactis, furcifer,  
Accipiam, modò sis veni huc : invenies infortunium.*

ECHARD, who saw no distinction between the familiar and the vulgar, has translated this in the true dialect of the streets :

“ I think there never was such a long  
“ night since the beginning of the world,  
“ except that night I had the strappado,  
“ and rid the wooden horse till morning ;  
“ and o’ my conscience, that was twice as

“ long \*. By the mackins, I believe Phœ-  
“ bus has been playing the good-fellow,  
“ and’s asleep too. I’ll be hang’d if he  
“ ben’t in for’t, and has took a little too  
“ much o’ the creature.

“ *Mer.* Say you so, slave? What, treat  
“ Gods like yourselves. By Jove, have  
“ at your doublet, Rogue, for *scandalum*  
“ *magnatum*. Approach then, you’ll ha’  
“ but small joy here.

“ *Mer.* *Accedam, atque hanc appellabo*  
“ *atque supparasitabo patri.*” *Ibid. sc. 3.*

“ *Mer.* I’ll to her, and tickle her up as  
“ my father has done.”

“ *Sosia.* *Irritabis crabrones.*” *Ibid. act 2.*  
*sc. 2.*

“ *Sosia.* You’d as good p—ss in a bee-  
“ hive.”

SENECA, though not a chaste writer, is re-  
markable for a courtly dignity of expres-

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\* Echard has here mistaken the author’s sense. He ought to have said, “ o’ my conscience, this night is twice as long as that was.”



## CHAPTER VI.

*Examples of a good Taste in Poetical Translation.—Bourne's Translations from Mallet and from Prior.—Dr Atterbury from Horace.—The Duke de Nivernois from Horace.—Dr Jortin from Simonides.—Imitation of the same by Dr Markham.—Mr Glasse from Mason's Caractacus.—Mr Webb from the Anthologia.—Grotius from the same.—Hughes from Claudian.—Beattie from Pope.—Pope from Boileau.—Fragments of the Greek Dramatists by Mr Cumberland.*

AFTER these examples of faulty translation, from a defect of taste in the translator, or the want of a just discernment of his author's style and manner of writing, I shall

now present the reader with some specimens of perfect translation, where the authors have entered with exquisite taste into the manner of their originals, and have succeeded most happily in the imitation of it.

THE first is the opening of the beautiful ballad of *William and Margaret*, translated by *Vincent Bourne*.

## I.

When all was wrapt in dark midnight,  
And all were fast asleep,  
He glided Margaret's grimly ghost,  
And stood at William's feet.

## II.

Her face was like the April morn,  
Clad in a wintry-cloud ;  
And clay-cold was her lily hand,  
That held her sable shrowd.

## III.

So shall the fairest face appear,  
When youth and years are flown ;  
Such is the robe that Kings must wear,  
When death has reft their crown.

## IV.

Her bloom was like the springing flower,  
 That sips the silver dew ;  
 The rose was budded in her cheek,  
 And opening to the view.

## V.

But Love had, like the canker-worm,  
 Consum'd her early prime ;  
 The rose grew pale and left her cheek,  
 She died before her time.

## I.

*Omnia nos tenebris, tacitaque involverat umbrā,  
 Et fessos homines vinxerat alta quies :  
 Cūm valvae patuere, et gressu illapsa silenti,  
 Thyrsidis ad legem stabat imago Chloës.*

## II.

*Vultus erat, qualis lachrymosi vultus Aprilis,  
 Cui dubia hyberno conditū imbre dies ;  
 Quaque sepulchralem à pedibus collegit amictum,  
 Candidior nivibus, frigidiorque manus.*

## III.

*Cumque dies aberunt molles, et leta juventus,  
 Gloria pallebit, sic Cyparissi tua ;  
 Cum mors decutiet capiti diademata, regum  
 Hac erit in trabea conspiciendus honos.*

## IV.

*Forma fuit (dum forma fuit) nascentis ad instar  
 Floris, cui cano gemmula rore tumet;  
 Et Veneres risere, et subrubiare labella,  
 Subrubet ut teneris purpura prima rosis.*

## V.

*Sed lenta exedit tibes mollemque ruborem,  
 Et faciles risus, et juvenile decus;  
 Et rosa paulatim languens, nudata reliquit  
 Ocula; præripuit mors properata Chloen.*

THE second is a small poem by Prior, entitled *Chloe Hunting*, which is likewise translated into Latin by Bourne.

Behind her neck her comely tresses tied,  
 Her ivory quiver graceful by her side,  
 A-hunting Chloe went; she lost her way,  
 And through the woods uncertain chanc'd to stray.  
 Apollo passing by beheld the maid;  
 And, Sister dear, bright Cynthia, turn, he said;  
 The hunted hind lies close in yonder brake.  
 Loud Cupid laugh'd, to see the God's mistake:  
 And laughing, cried, Learn better, great Divine,  
 To know thy kindred, and to honour mine.  
 Rightly advis'd, far hence thy sister seek,  
 Or on Meander's banks, or Latmus' peak.

But in this nymph, my friend, my sister know ;  
 She draws my arrows, and she bends my bow.  
 Fair Thames she haunts, and every neighbouring grove,  
 Sacred to soft recess, and gentle Love.  
 Go with thy Cynthia, hurl the pointed spear  
 At the rough boar, or chace the flying deer :  
 I, and my Chloe, take a nobler aim ;  
 At human hearts we fly, nor ever miss the game.

*Forte Chloe, pulchres nudo collecta capillos  
 Post collum, pharetraque latus succincta decora,  
 Venatrix ad sylvam ibat : cervumque secuta  
 Elapsum viu, deserta per avia tendit  
 Incerta. Errantem nympham consperit Apollo,  
 Et, converte tuos, disti, mea Cynthia, catus ;  
 En ibi (monstravitque manu) tibi cervus anhelat  
 Occultus dum, latebrisque moratur in illis.*

*Improbis hec audivit Amor, lepidumque cachinum  
 Attollens, poterantne etiam tua numina falli ?  
 Hinc, queso, bone Phaebe, tuam dignosce sororem,  
 Et melius venerare meam. Tua Cynthia longe,  
 Maxandi ad ripas, aut summi in vertice Latni,  
 Versatur ; nostra est soror hec, nostra, inquit amica, est,  
 Hec nostros promit calmos, circumque sonantem  
 Incurvat, Tamquamque colens, placidoque recessu  
 Lucorum, quos alma quies sacravit amori.*

*Ité per umbratos saltus, lustrisque vel aprivis  
 Excutile horrentem setis, cervumve fugacem,  
 Tuque sororque tua, et directo sternite ferro :  
 Nobilior labor, et divis dignissima cura,  
 Meque Chloenque manet ; nos corda humana ferimus,  
 Vibrantes certum ordinis nec inutile telum.*

THE third example I shall give, is Bishop Atterbury's translation of the third Ode of the fourth book of Horace \* :

He, on whose birth the Lyric Queen  
 Of numbers smil'd, shall never grace  
 Th' Isthmian gauntlet, nor be seen  
 First in the fam'd Olympic race.

He shall not, after toils of war,  
 And taming haughty monarch's pride,  
 With laurel'd brows, conspicuous far,  
 To Jove's Tarpeian temple ride.

But him the streams that warbling flow  
 Rich Tyber's flow'ry meads along,  
 And shady groves (his haunts) shall know  
 The Master of the Aeolian song.

---

\* It is of this celebrated ode that Joseph Scaliger has absurdly said, " that he had rather have been the author, than King of Arragon."

The sons of Rome, majestic Rome !  
 Have fix'd me in the Poet's choir,  
 And envy now, or dead, or dumb,  
 Forbears to blame what they admire.

Goddess of the sweet-sounding lute,  
 Which thy harmonious touch obeys,  
 Who canst the finny race, tho' mute,  
 To Cygnet's dying accents raise ;

Thy gift it is, that all with ease,  
 My new, unrival'd honours own ;  
 That I still live, and living please,  
 O Goddess ! is thy gift alone.

---

*Quem tu, Melpomene, semel  
 Nascentem placido lumine videris,  
 Illum non labor Isthmius  
 Clarabit pugilem ; non equus impiger*

*Curru ducet Achaico  
 Victorem ; neque res bellica Deliius  
 Ornatum foliis ducem,  
 Quod regum tumidas contuderit minas,*

*Otiendet Capitolio :  
 Sed que Tibur aquæ fertile perfluvunt,  
 Et spissæ nemorum come ;  
 Fingent Æolio carmine nobilem.*

*Romæ principis urbium  
Dignatur soboles inter amabiles  
Vatum ponere me choros ;  
Et jam dente minus mordor incide.*

*O, testudinis aureæ  
Dulcem quo strepitum, Pieri, temperæ !  
O mutis quoque pœcibus  
Donatura Cycni, si libeat, sonum !  
  
Totum muneric hoc tui est,  
Quod monstror digito prederuntum  
Romane fidicen lyras :  
Quod spiro et placeo, si placeo, tuum est \*.*

\* An anonymous English translator of the same ode has done justice to his original, in a complete transfusion of its sense, and a considerable portion of its nerve and spirit ; but with a sensible deficiency of that ease and melody of numbers which characterize his prototype, and shine conspicuously in the preceding translation :

Whom thou, O daughter chaste of Jove,  
Didst at his birth, with eyes of love  
Behold, in Isthmian games, nor he  
Fam'd for the wrestler's wreath shall be ;  
Nor yet his latest lineage grace,  
By conquering in the chariot-race :  
Nor him the toils to warriors known,  
A laurel'd chief, shall victor crown.

THE fourth specimen, is a translation by the Duke de Nivernois, of Horace's dialogue with Lydia :

HORACE.

Plus heureux qu'un monarque au faite des grandeur,  
J'ai vu mes jours dignes d'envie,  
Tranquilles, ils couloient au gré de nos ardeurs :  
Vous m'aimiez, charmante Lydie.

---

But fruitful Tibur's winding floods,  
And all her verdant mass of woods,  
To render famous shall conspire,  
For varied verse that suits the lyre.  
Imperial Rome, the nurse of Fame,  
Has deign'd to register my name  
Among the poets' tuneful choir,  
And envy how abates her ire.  
Goddess, who the notes doat swell,  
So sweetly on my golden shell ;  
Who canst confer, if such thy choice,  
On fishes mute the cygnet's voice :  
'Tis to thee I wholly owe.  
Whispers flying where I go ;  
That to the pressing throng I'm show'd  
Inventor of the Roman ode.

## LYDIE.

Que mes jours étoient beaux, quand des soins les plus doux  
 Vous payiez ma flamme sincère !  
 Venus me regardoit avec des yeux jaloux ;  
 Chloé n'avoit pas su vous plaire.

## HORACE.

Par son luth, par sa voix, organe des amours,  
 Chloé seule me paroit belle :  
 Si le Destin jaloux veut épargner ses jours,  
 Je donnerai les miens pour elle.

## LYDIE.

Le jeune Calaïs, plus beau que les amours,  
 Plait seul à mon ame ravie :  
 Si le Destin jaloux veut épargner ses jours,  
 Je donnerai deux fois ma vie.

## HORACE.

Quoi, si mes premiers feux, ranimant leur ardeur,  
 Etouffoient une amour fatale ;  
 Si, perdant pour jamais tous ses droits sur mon cœur,  
 Chloé vous laissoit sans rivale——

## LYDIE.

Calaïs est charmant : mais je n'aime que vous,  
 Ingrat, mon cœur vous justifie ;  
 Heureuse également en des liens si doux,  
 De perdre ou de passer la vie.

## HORACE.

*Donec gratus eram tibi,  
Nec quisquam potior brachia candida  
Cervici juvenis dabat ;  
Persarum vigui rege beatior.*

## LYDIA.

*Donec non aliam magis  
Arresti, neque erat Lydia post Chloen ;  
Multi Lydia nominis  
Romana vigui clarior Ilia.*

## HORACE.

*Me nunc Thressa Chloe regit,  
Dulces docta modos, et citharæ sciens ;  
Pro qua non metuam mori,  
Si parcent animæ fata superstili.*

## LYDIA.

*Me torret face mutua  
Thurini Calais filius Ornithi ;  
Pro quo bis patiar mori,  
Si parcent puero fata superstili.*

## HORACE.

*Quid, si priosa redit Venus,  
Diductaque jugo cogit aheneo?  
Si flava excutitur Chloe,  
Rejectaque patet janua Lydia?*

## LYDIA.

*Quamquam sidere pulsabor  
Ille est, tu levior cortice, et improbo  
Irascundior Hadria;  
Tecum vivere amem, tecum abeam libens.*

Hor. L. 3. Od. 9.

If any thing is faulty in this excellent translation by the Duke de Nivernois, it is the last stanza, which does not convey the happy petulance, the *procacitas* of the original. The reader may compare with this, the fine translation of the same Ode by Bishop Atterbury, “ Whilst I was fond, “ and you were kind,” which is too well known to require insertion.

The next example is a translation by Dr Jortin, of that beautiful fragment of Simonides, preserved by Dionysius, in which Danae, exposed with her child to the fury

of the ocean, by command of her inhuman father, is described lamenting over her sleeping infant :

*Ex Dionys. Hal. De Compositione Verborum, c. 26.*

"Οτε λάρνακι ετ δαιδαλίᾳ ἄνεμος  
 Βρέμη πνίσσει, κινηθεῖσσα δε λιρυτα  
 Δείματι ἔρειτεν· ετ' ἀδιάνταισι  
 Παρεῖαις, ἀμφὶ τι Περσαῖς Κάλλει  
 Φίλαιν χερα, ἔπει τε· ἢ τενος,  
 'Οιοι εχων πονον. συ δάυτε γαλαθηνῷ  
 "Ητορε κινάσσεις ει ἀτερτει δάματι,  
 Χαλκεογόμφῳ δε, τυκτιλαμπεῖ,  
 Κναινει τε διεφῳ· συ δ' αναλισαι  
 'Τζερθε τιαν κόμαν Σαβσίαι  
 Παριότος κύματος επ ἀλέγεισ  
 'Ουδ ἀτεμε φθόγγων, πορφυρίᾳ  
 Κείμενος ει χλωνδι, πρόσεντον καλόν·  
 Ει δέ τοι δαιον τό γε δεινὸν ην  
 Και κει ἐμων ρημάτων λεπτὸν  
 Τητῆχεις οιας. κελομαι, ἔιδε, Βρέφος,

Ἐυδίτω δε πόντος, ιυδίτω ἄμειρον κακόν.  
 Ματαιοθελία δί τις φανείη  
 Ζευ τάτερ, ἐκ σέο· ὅτι δὴ θαρσαλός  
 Ἐκος, ἔυχομαι τεκνόφι δίκας μοι.

Nocte sub obscura, verrentibus aequora ventis,  
 Quum brevis immensa cymba nataret aqua  
 Multa gemens Danaë subjicit brachia nato, .  
 Et teneræ lacrymis immaduere genæ.  
 Tu tamen ut dulci, dixit, pulcherrime, somno  
 Obrutus, et metuens tristia nulla, jaces !  
 Quamvis, heu quales cunas tibi concutit unda,  
 Præbet et incertam pallida luna facem,  
 Et vehemens flavos everberat aura capillos,  
 Et prope, subsultans, irrigat ora liquor.  
 Nata, meam sentis vocem ? Nil cernis et audis,  
 Teque premunt placidi vincula blanda dei ;  
 Nec mihi purpureis effundis blæsa labellis  
 Murmura, nec notos configuis usque sinus.  
 Care, quiesce, puer, sævique quiescite fluctus,  
 Et mea qui pulsas corda, quiesce, dolor.  
 Cresce puer ; matris leni atque ulciscere luctus,  
 Tuque tuos saltem protege summe Tonans.

THIS admirable translation falls short of its original only in a single particular, the measure of the verse. One striking beauty

of the original, is the easy and loose structure of the verse, which has little else to distinguish it from animated discourse, but the harmony of the syllables ; and hence it has more of natural impassioned eloquence, than is conveyed by the regular measure of the translation. That this characteristic of the original should have been overlooked by the ingenious translator, is the more remarkable, that the poem is actually quoted by Dionysius, as an apposite example of that species of composition in which poetry approaches to the freedom of prose ; *τὴς ἐμμέλεις καὶ ἐμμέτρει συνθέσεως, τὴς ἐχέσης πολλὴν ὄμοιότητα πρὸς τὴν πεζὴν λέξιν.* Dr Markham saw this excellence of the original ; and in that fine imitation of the verses of Simonides, which an able critic \* has pronounced to be far superior to the original, has given it its full effect. The passage alluded to is an apostrophe of a mother to her sleeping infant, a widowed mother, who has just left the deathbed of her husband.

His constibus occupata, ocellos  
Guttis lucidulis adhuc madentes  
Convertit, puerum sopore vinctum,  
Qua nutrix placido sinu fovebat:  
Dormis, inquit, O miselle, nec te  
Vultus exanimes, silentiumque  
Per longa atra commovent, nec ullo  
Fratrum tangenteris, aut meo dolore;  
Nec sentis patre destitutus illo,  
Qui gestans genibusve brachiove,  
Aut formans lepidam tuam loquelam,  
Tecum mille modis ineptiebat.  
Tu dormis, volitantque qui solebant  
Risus in roseis tuis labellis.—  
Dormi parvule! nec mali dolores  
Qui matrem cruciant tue quietis  
Rumpant somnia.—Quando, quando tales  
Redibunt oculis meis sopores!

As a counterpart to these specimens of Latin translation, or imitation from the Greek, I shall now lay before the reader, what I conceive to be an attempt yet more arduous, though accomplished with equal felicity. The specimen I allude to is taken from a complete translation of Mason's *Caractacus* into Greek verse, by the late Mr

Glasse of Christ Church, Oxon ; a work which has been justly deemed one of the most extraordinary efforts in Greek literature that has appeared since the revival of letters.

The following speech of Caractacus to the, Druids, who attempt to soothe his agitated mind, preparatory to the ceremony of initiating him in their mysteries, and adopting him into their sacred order, must be allowed to possess great poetical merit. I present it first in the English ; in order that those parts may be more particularly remarked, in which the translator has assumed an allowable latitude, and perhaps even improved upon his original.

THE Chief of the Druids thus addresses Caractacus ; proposing to him the virtuous fortitude of his daughter as an example :

---

See, Prince, this prudent maid,  
Now, while the ruddy flame of sparkling youth

Glows on her beauteous cheek, can quit the world  
Without a sigh, whilst thou-----

## CARACTACUS.

would save my queen,  
From a base ravisher ; would wish to plunge  
This falchion in his breast, and so avenge  
Insulted royalty. O holy men !  
Ye are the sons of piety and peace ;  
Ye never felt the sharp vindictive spur  
That goads the injur'd warrior ; the hot tide  
That flushes crimson on the conscious cheek  
Of him who burns for glory ; else indeed  
Ye much would pity me : would curse the fate  
That coops me here inactive in your graves,  
Robs me of hope, tells me this trusty steel  
Must never cleave one Roman helm again,  
Never avenge my queen, nor free my country.

## DRUID.

'Tis Heaven's high will-----

## CARACTACUS.

I know it, reverend fathers !  
'Tis Heaven's high will, that these poor aged eyes  
Shall never more behold that virtuous woman,  
To whom my youth was constant : 'twas Heaven's high will  
To take her from me at that very hour,

When best her love might soothe me ; that black hour,  
 May memory ever raze it from her records !  
 When all my squadrons fled, and left their king  
 Old and defenceless : him, who nine whole years  
 Had taught them how to conquer : yes, my friends,  
 For nine whole years against the sons of rapine  
 I led my veterans, oft to victory,  
 Never, till then, to shame ! Bear with me, Druid,  
 I've done : begin the rites.

The beauties of this fine speech are not impaired in the following version, which, with equal pathos, has a simplicity more consonant to the language of the translation, than would have been any attempt to imitate the glowing diction of the original :

ΧΟΡΟΣ (ιες Ευηλισην).

Καλῶς ἔλεξας· καὶ τὸ βέλτισον φρονεῖς,  
 Ἔτις, γεῖνις ὅσα, καρτερῶς ἔτλης  
 Δεινὸν ταραγμὸν, ἥδ' ὑποπτευσιν φέρειν  
 Ἀρχῆς τὸν αγαυῆς, καὶ καλῆς τυραννίδος.  
 Σὺ δὲ οὐ Καράκτας· —————

## ΚΑΡΑΚΤΑΚΟΣ.

Ἐκ μιάσφορος θέλω  
 Ἀλοχον σαῶσαι· τῷδε τὸν αλκιμῷ δορὶ<sup>1</sup>  
 Παῖσαι τὸν ὑβρισῆρ, ὅπως, γύπτων ἔλαρ,  
 Τιμωρίαν βδελυγμάτως δεινὴν λάβῃ.  
 Τμεῖς εν ὅλῳ, χρήσυχῶς, θεοχροτοι,  
 Γηράσκετ<sup>2</sup>· εἰ δὲ κέντρον, φῶς σαμάρμορος  
 Ἀναξ πακτύται, τήν τε σεμνὴν ἐκβασιν  
 Εὐθυγιασμόν τὸν ἀνέρος σραῖηγέτε  
 Εποήσατ<sup>3</sup>, οὐκτείροιτ<sup>4</sup> ἀν ἀθλιώτατοι,  
 Οὐ δέολωλότ<sup>5</sup> ὄβριμος ποίης ἄπο  
 Λέλοιτεν ἐλπίς<sup>6</sup> δύκοτ<sup>7</sup>, ἔποθ<sup>8</sup> υσιρον  
 Ρωμαῖον ἐν μάχαισιν ἀταστατήσει  
 Δαμαζέλ<sup>9</sup>· ἀφ' ὑβρισῆρος ἡ σαώσομαι,  
 Όυ γῆν παλεύαν. Λέξετ<sup>10</sup>, “ “Ηθελον Θεοί.” ”  
 Γιωτὸν, γεραιοί· ψήφισταν δεινοὶ θεοὶ,  
 Μέ μηκέτ<sup>11</sup> ἱσιδεῖν εμην<sup>12</sup> Γιδηρίαν,  
 Ήβη τε, γήρατ<sup>13</sup> τούς, αἰεν ἡγαπημένην·  
 Απώλεσ<sup>14</sup>, ὥτε μάλιστα σώζειν ἄφελον  
 Μείλιγμ<sup>15</sup> ἀνίας, καὶ πόνων θελητῆριαν·

Ολοῦσσε παιδὸς ἄμαρ, φρύγαν κακῶν  
 Δειλαὶ φιλαγγεῖς, καὶ μὲν ἐπόλμασσα λιττεῖν  
 'Αναχθ', ὃς ἱγάλων ἀποπλύσαν πάτα  
 'Ηγυπτάμαν πρὸς πιθεῖς ἐπιάσθες γραπτῷ.  
 'Αισχεῖς ἴρωντες παιδεῖς—Ω Δρυῖ, Δρυῖ,  
 Μανῆς φορῆμαν—παιῶν ἐξαύδων λόγους;  
 Σιγῆ—πειράντες', οὐ δύσι, δυσμα.

*CEAESTACUS, Greco Carmine redditus, a GEORGIO HENRICO  
 GLASSER, A. B. *Hædes Christi schmone.* Ossen, 1771.*

THE next specimen I shall give, is the translation of a beautiful epigram, from the *Anthologia*, which is supposed by Junius to be descriptive of a painting mentioned by Pliny †, in which, a mother wounded, and

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\* The author of this excellent translation gave afterwards to the public a similar proof of erudition and taste in his version of the *Samson Agonistes* of Milton. See ΣΑΜΤΩΝ ΑΓΩΝΙΣΤΗΣ, Greco Carmine redditus, a G. H. GLASSER, A. M. *Hædes Christi super almano.* Ossen, 1788.

† *Hujus (viz. Aristidis) pictura est, oppido capto, ad matris morientis e vulnere mammam adrepens infans; intelligi-*

in the agony of death, is represented as giving suck to her infant for the last time.

"Ελκε, τάλαν, παρα μητρος οὐ υπέστι μαζίν ἀμελέεις,  
 "Ελκυσσον ὑστατιον τῷμα καταφθίμενης.  
 'Ηδη γαρ ξιφίσσοι λιπόκνοος· ἀλλὰ τὰ μητρος  
 Φιλτρακαὶ εἰ ἀιδη ταιδοκομεῖ ἔμαθον.

Thus happily translated into English by Mr Webb :

Suck, little wretch, while yet thy mother lives,  
 Suck the last drop her fainting bosom gives!  
 She dies: her tenderness survives her breath,  
 And her fond love is provident in death:

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*turque sentire mater et timere, ne emortuo lacte sanguinem inflave lambat.* PLIN. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 10.—If the epigram was made on the subject of this picture, Pliny's idea of the expression of the painting is somewhat more refined than that of the epigrammatist, though certainly not so natural. As a complicated feeling can never be clearly expressed in painting, it is not improbable that the same picture should have suggested ideas somewhat different to different observers.

Nor with less felicity of expression, and with yet more strict fidelity to the original, is the following epigram from the Anthologia, translated into Latin by Grotius :

Ἡ Παφίη Κυθέρεια δί' ὄδιμαλος ες Κνίδον ἥλθε,  
Βελομένη καλιδεῖν ἐικόνα τὴν ἴδιην.  
Πάνη δ' ἀθρήσασα περισκέπτω ἐνί χώρῃ,  
Φθεγξαίο, Πεῖ γυμνὴν ἔιδε με Πραξιτέλης;  
Πραξιτέλης ἐκ ἔιδεν ἀ μὴ θέμις, ἀλλ' ὁ σιδηρος  
Ἐξεσ' Ἀρης ὅιαν ἥθελε τὴν Παφίην.

*Lib. iv. c. 12.*

Diva Paphi Cnidiam trans aequora venit ad urbem,  
Effigiem cupiens pulchra videre suam.  
Venis ut in templum, lustravitque omnia, Quando est  
Praxiteles nudam me speculatus ? ait.  
Non vidit, Venus, ille nefas quae cernere ; sed Mars  
Ferreus expressit qualem amat ipse Deam.

EQUAL in merit to any of the preceding, is the following translation by Mr Hughes from Claudian.

*Ex Epithalamio Honori et Mariae.*

*Cunctatur stupefacta Venus ; nunc ora puella,*  
*Nunc flavam niveo miratur vertice matrem.*  
*Hæc modo crescenti, plene par altera Luna ;*  
*Assurgit cœu fortè minor sub matre virest;*  
*Laurus : et ingentes ramos, olimque futuras*  
*Promittit jam parva comas : vel flore sub uno*  
*Seu geminae Paestana roses per jugera regnant.*  
*Hæc largo matura die, satratalaque vernis*  
*Roribus indulget spatio : laet altera nodo,*  
*Nec teneris audet foliis admittere soles.*

The goddess paus'd ; and, held in deep amaze,  
 Now views the mother's, now the daughter's face,  
 Different in each, yet equal beauty glows ;  
 That, the full moon, and this, the crescent shows.  
 Thus, rais'd beneath its parent tree is seen  
 The laurel shoot, while in its early green  
 Thick sprouting leaves and branches are essay'd,  
 And all the promise of a future shade.  
 Or blooming thus, in happy Paestan fields,  
 One common stock two lovely roses yields :  
 Mature by vernal dews, this dares display  
 Its leaves full-blown, and boldly meets the day :  
 That, folded in its tender nonge lies,  
 A beauteous bud, nor yet admits the skies.

THE following passage, from a Latin version of the Messiah of Pope, by a youth of uncommon genius \*, exhibits the singular union of ease, animation and harmony of numbers, with the strictest fidelity to the original.

*Lanigera ut canù placidus regit agmina pastor,  
Aëria ut explores parum, campoque virentes ;  
Amicis ut querit oves, moderatur euntum  
Ut gressus, curatque diu, noctuque tuetur :  
Ut teneros, agnos lenia inter brachia tollit,  
Mulcenti pastit palma, gremiisque facillat ;  
Sic genus omne hominum sic complectetur amans  
Pectore, promisus seculo Pater ille futuro.*

As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,  
Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air ;  
Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,  
By day o'ersess them, and by night protects ;

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\* J. H. Beattie, son of the learned and ingenious Dr Beattie of Aberdeen, a young man who disappointed the promise of great talents by an early death. In him, the author of *The Minstrel* saw his *Edwin* realized.

The tender lambs he raises in his arms,  
 Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms :  
 Thus shall mankind his guardian care engage  
 The promis'd Father of the future age.

THE following translation by Pope, of a fable from Boileau, affords a singular example of a very rare conjunction, the most scrupulous fidelity to the original, with a complete transfusion of its poetical spirit :

Once, (says an author, where, I need not say,) Two travellers found an oyster in their way ; Both fierce, both hungry ; the dispute grew strong, While, scale in hand, dame Justice pass'd along. Before her each with clamour pleads the laws, Explain'd the matter, and would win the cause. Dame Justice, weighing long the doubtful right, Takes, opens, swallows it, before their sight. The cause of strife remov'd so rarely well, There take, (says Justice), take ye, each, a shell. We thrive at Westminster by fools like you ! 'Twas a fat oyster.—Live in peace—Adieu.

Un jour, dit un auteur, n'importe en quel chapitre, Deux voyageurs à jeun, rencontrèrent une huître. Tous deux la contestoient, lorsque dans leur chemin, La Justice passa, la balance à la main ;

Devant elle à grand bruit ils expliquent la chose ;  
Tous deux avec depens veulent gagner leur cause.  
La Justice, pesant ce droit litigieux,  
Demande l'huître, l'ouvre, et l'avale à leurs yeux ;  
Et par ce bel arrêt terminant la bataille ;  
Tenez, voilà, dit elle, à chacun une écaille.  
Des sottises d'autrui nous vivons au Palais ;  
Messieurs, l'huître étoit bonne.— Adieu.—Vivez en paix.

To these specimens of perfect translation, in which, not only the ideas of the original are completely transfused, but the manner most happily imitated, I add the following admirable translations by Mr Cumberland \*, of two fragments from the Greek dramatists Timocles and Diphilus, which are preserved by Athenæus.

THE first of these passages beautifully illustrates the moral uses of the tragic drama :

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\* *Observer*, vol. iv. p. 115. and vol. v. p. 145.

Nay, my good friend, but hear me ! I confess  
Man is the child of sorrow, and this world,  
In which we breathe, hath cares enough to plague us ;  
But it hath means wherewith to soothe these cares :  
And he who meditates on others woes,  
Shall in that meditation lose his own :  
Call then the tragic poet to your aid,  
Hear him, and take instruction from the stage :  
Let Telephus appear ; behold a prince,  
A spectacle of poverty and pain,  
Wretched in both---And what if you are poor ?  
Are you a despis'd ? Are you the son  
Of Hercules ? Begone ! Complain no more.  
Doth your mind struggle with distracting thoughts ?  
Do your wits wander ? Are you mad ? Alas !  
So was Alcmeon, whilst the world ador'd  
His father as their God. Your eyes are dim ;  
What then ! The eyes of Oedipus were dark,  
Totally dark. You mourn a son ; he's dead ;  
Turn to the tale of Niobe for comfort,  
And match your loss with hers. You're lame of foot ;  
Compare it with the foot of Philoctetes,  
And make no more complaint. But you are old,  
Old and unfortunate ; consult Oeneus ;  
Hear what a king endur'd, and learn content.  
Sum up your miseries, number up your sighs,

The tragic stage shall give you tear for tears,  
And wash out all afflictions but its own \*.

THE following fragment from Diphilus conveys a very favourable idea of the spirit

\* The original of the fragment of Timocles :

Ω τάτ, μάκαρος οὐ οὐ μελλει λόγιον.  
Ανθρώπος οὐ γάρ οὐδέποτε φύγει,  
Καὶ πελλε λυπηρό οὐδες οὐδεποτε φύγει.  
Παρενθυγάδες οὐδε φροντίδες οὐδείρηστο  
Ταίνεις. οὐ γάρ της οὐδεν οὐδέντες λαβέσαι,  
Πρέστες αὐλοτρύπις τι φυγάδερηγαθείς παθεῖ,  
Μετ' οὐδενος ἀπόλιτη σπαδεσθεις δ' οὐδεις.  
Τὰς γάρ τραγουρδίας πρότοις οὐ βάλει σπάσκει,  
Ος αὐτολόγοι παντες. οὐ μάλι γάρ δι πάντες  
Πτωχήτερος αύτη καταπαθεῖν τὸν Τάλαρον  
Γούφειν, οὐδε τὰς τείλεις βάλει φύγει.  
Ο ποτέν δε μακαρος, Αλημαίον' οὐκέφυγε.  
Ορθιαλημαίος; εἰσι Φιλέδαις τοφλαί.  
Τέληνε τη παῖδε; οὐ Μαίβα κατέφυγε.  
Χωλές οὐδε οὐτε; τὸν Θιλαστήντα οὐδε.

of the dialogue, in what has been termed the New Comedy of the Greeks, or that which was posterior to the age of Alexan-

Γέγον τις ἐνυχός; κατίφεατι τὸν Οἰνόα.  
 Ληταρτε γέρε τὰ μαύραν' οὐ πίπονδι τις;  
 Αρυγχίαντος ἄλλοις γνογότες ἐνεργεόντες,  
 Τὰς ἀντὶς αἰτοῦ συμφορὰς πάσοι φέρου.

*Athen. Deip. lib. vi.*

Thus, in the literal version of Dalechampius :

*Hem amice, nunc ausculia quod dicturus sum tibi.  
 Animal natura laboriosum homo est.  
 Tristia vita secum affert plurima :  
 Itaque curarum haec adinvenit solatia :  
 Mensem enim suorum malorum oblitam,  
 Alienorum casum reputatio consolatur,  
 Indeque fit ea laeta, et eruditia ad sapientiam.  
 Trajicos enim primum, si libet, considera,  
 Quam pro sint omnibus. Qui eget,  
 Pauperiorem se fuisse Telephum  
 Cum intelligit, lenius fert inopiam.  
 Ineania qui ægrotat, de Alcmeone is cogitet.  
 Lippus est aliquis, Phinea cæcum is contemplatur.  
 Obiit tibi filius, dolorem levabit exemplum Niobe.  
 Claudiocat quispiam, Philocteten is respicito.*

der the Great. Of this period Diphilus and Menander were among the most shining ornaments :

We have a notable good law at Corinth,  
Where, if an idle fellow outruns reason,  
Feasting and junketting at furious cost,  
The sumptuary proctor calls upon him,  
And thus begins to sift him.—You live well,  
But have you well to live? You squander freely,  
Have you the wherewithal? Have you the fund  
For these outgoings? If you have, go on!  
If you have not, we'll stop you in good time,  
Before you outrun honesty; for he  
Who lives we know not how, must live by plunder;  
Either he picks a purse, or robs a house,  
Or is accomplice with some knavish gang,  
Or thrusts himself in crowds, to play th' informer,  
And put his perjur'd evidence to sale:  
This a well-order'd city will not suffer;  
Such vermin we expel.—“ And you do wisely:  
“ But what is that to me?”—Why this it is:

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*Miser est senex aliquis, in Cenorum is intuetor.*  
*Omnia namque graviora quam patiatur*  
*Infortunia quisvis animadvertens in aliis cum deprehenderit,*  
*Suas calamitates luget minus.*

Here we behold you every day at work,  
 Living forsooth ! not as your neighbours live,  
 But richly, royally, ye gods !—Why man,  
 We cannot get a fish for love or money,  
 You swallow the whole produce of the sea :  
 You've driv'n our citizens to browse on cabbage ;  
 A sprig of parsley sets them all a fighting,  
 As at the Isthmian games : If hare or partridge,  
 Or but a simple thrush comes to the market,  
 Quick, at a word, you snap him : By the Gods !  
 Hunt Athena through, you shall not find a feather  
 But in your kitchen ; and for wine, 'tis gold——  
 Not to be purchas'd.—We may drink the ditches. \*

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\* The original of the fragment of Diphilus :

Ταῦτον οὐρανὸν ἔτι βίλτης ἔνθαδε  
 Καρπίδιον, οὐτε τούτον ἀμφιπόνταντον  
 Λαρυγγῖς ἐργαστε, τότεν ἀπαρχίαντον τοῦτο  
 Ζῆτι, καὶ τούτον. καὶ μετ' ἐπίστιν ἡχητή  
 Ήτε ἀπλόποιοι λόγοις τὸν ἀπαλάριστον,  
 Εἴτε ἀπλάσινον γένος τὸν βίλον.  
 Εάντι δὲ ὑπὲ τοις ἀστίαις διεπιπλῶν τύχη,  
 Απῆκτος ἀντῶν τότεν μὴ ποιεῖται.  
 Οτις δὲ μὴ μοι παῦσται, ξενίβαλος ζρυπαῖς.  
 Εάντι δὲ μαρτίον ἔχειν ζῆτι πελοπίλας,  
 Τῷ δημοφι περιπέποιται ἀντον. Ηραίλας.  
 ΟΥτε ἀδίκησις γαρέει δῆτι ἀντον ποτίσ.

On equal merit with these two last specimens, are the greatest part of those translations given by Mr Cumberland of the fragments of the Greek dramatists. The lite-

Τότες οὐδές, ἀλλ' ἀναγκαῖον ἔχει  
Η λαπτιδεῖον τὰς γίνεται, ἐπιγενεράδιον,  
Η τὸν ποιητὴν οὐδέται ποιητικὸν τυπον.  
Η συνοφρεῖον καὶ ἀγροῦ, ἐπιμετραῖον,  
τριπλῆ. ταῦτα πεποιηθέντα γένεται.  
Ορθός γε τὸ Διό, ἀλλαχθὲν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ;  
Ορθός οὐκοῦντες ταῦτα μάρτυρες,  
ΟΤχος μοργανα, βάλλοντος, σ', ἀλλ' ἀπερφένειον,  
ΟΤχος ἵψειον, ὥντοντος μοναδικόν.  
Ζευσίστας ἡρώς τοι λέγοντα τον πόλειον,  
πέρι τῶν σείσιον μερχθεῖτο μόνος ισθρίας.  
Δεργάς τις εἰσιλέλαυτος; ειδὼς μέρπανος.  
Πίερδικας γε ἐπιχλεώς; παῖς τὸ Διό τον ἔστι  
εἰπεῖν δι εἰρῆσθαι περιπλανεῖται.  
Τὸν γαρδαίνειν λαζαρίσαντας πολέα.

*Athen. Deip. lib. vi.*

Thus in the version of Dalechampius;

A. *Talis iūic lex est, o vir optime,*  
*Corinthiis: si quem obsoletum semper*  
*Splendidius aspergint, illum ut interrogant*  
*Unde vivat, quidnam agat: quod si facultates illi sunt*

rary world owes to that ingenious writer a very high obligation for his excellent view of the progress of the dramatic art among the Greeks, and for the collection he has

*Quarum ad eum sumptum redditus sufficiat,  
Eo vitæ luxu permittunt frui :  
Sin amplius impendat quam pro re sua,  
Ne id porro faciat interdictitur.  
Si non pareat, multa quidem plectitur.  
Si sumptuose vivit qui nihil prorsus habet,  
Traditur puniendus carnifci. B. Proh Hercules.*

*A. Quod enim scias, fieri minime potest  
Ut qui eo est ingenio, non vivat improbe : itaque necessum  
Vel noctu grassantem obvios spoliare, vel effractarium pa-  
riitem suffodere,  
Vel his se furibus adjungere socium,  
Aut delatorem et quadruplatorem esse in foro ; aut falsum  
Testari : à talium hominum genere purgatur civitas.*

*B. Recte, per Jovem : sed ad me quid hoc attinet ?*

*A. Nos te videmus obsonantem quotidie  
Haud mediocriter, vir optime, sed fastuose, et magnifice,  
Ne pisciculum quidem habere licet causa tua :  
Cives nostros commisisti, pugnatiros de oleribus :*

made of the remains of more than fifty of their comic poets \*.

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*De apio dimicamus tanquam in Isthmiis,  
Si lepus accessit, cum extemlo rapis.  
Perdicem, ac turdum ne volantem quidem  
Propter vos, ita me Jupiter amet, nobis jam videre licet,  
Peregrini multum auxistis vini pretium.*

\* The greater part of the fragments translated by Mr Cumberland, are to be found in two separate works of Grotius, viz. *Excerpta ex Tragediis et Commediosis Graecis*, Paris, 1626, 4to; and *Dicta Poetarum quae apud Stobaeum extant*; Paris, 1628, 4to.



## CHAP. VII.

*Limitation of the Rule regarding the Imitation of Style.—This Imitation must be regulated by the Genius of Languages.—The Latin admits of a greater Brevity of Expression than the English;—As does the French.—The Latin and Greek allow greater Inversions than the English,—And admit more freely of Ellipsis.*

THE rule which enjoins to a translator the imitation of the style of the original author, demands several limitations.

1. THIS imitation must always be regulated by the nature of the genius of the languages of the original and of the translation.

THE Greek language, from the frequency and familiarity of ellipsis, allows a conciseness of expression which is scarcely attainable in any other tongue, and perhaps least of all in the English.

‘Ο μὲν ἡφ’ ὅις δᾶ, καὶ ὅις δᾶ ὁργιζόμενος, ἵτι δὲ  
καὶ ὡς δᾶ, καὶ ὡς, καὶ ὅσον χρόνον, ἵτανεται.

ARISTOT.

To render this faithfully into English, it is impossible to use fewer words than the following: “ He is to be commended, who is “ angry with those persons whom he ought “ to be angry with, and who is angry in such “ a manner, and at such proper time, and “ only for so long a time, as the cause and “ occasion justify.”

THE Latin language, too, though in an inferior degree to the Greek, admits of a brevity, which cannot be successfully imitated in the English.

CICERO thus writes to Trebatius, (Lib. 7, ep. 17.):

*In Britaniam te profectum non esse gaudeo, quod et tu labore caruisti, et ego te de rebus illis non audiam.*

It is impossible to translate this into English with equal brevity, and at the same time do complete justice to the sentiment. Melmoth, therefore, has shewn great judgment, in sacrificing the imitation of style to the perfect transfusion of the sense. “ I am “ glad, for my sake as well as yours, that “ you did not attend Cæsar into Britain ; “ as it has not only saved you the fatigue of “ a very disagreeable journey, but me like- “ wise that of being the perpetual auditor “ of your wonderful exploits.” *Melm. Cic. Lett. b. 2. l. 12.*

PLINY to Minutianus, Lib. 3. Ep. 9. says, towards the end of his letter : *Temerè diri —Succurrit quod praterieram, et quidem serò: sed quanquam præpostè reddetur. Facit hoc Homerus, multique illius exemplo. Est alioqui perdecorum: a me tamen non ideo fiet.* It is no doubt possible to translate this passage into English with a conciseness

almost equal to the original ; but in this experiment we must sacrifice all its ease and spirit. “ I have said this rashly—I recollect an omission—somewhat too late indeed. It shall now be supplied, though a little preposterously. Homer does this : and many after his example. Besides, it is not unbecoming ; but this is not my reason.” Let us mark how Mr Melmoth, by a happy amplification, has preserved the spirit and ease, though sacrificing the brevity of the original. “ But upon recollection, I find that I must recal that last word ; for I perceive, a little too late indeed, that I have omitted a material circumstance. However, I will mention it here, though something out of its place. In this, I have the authority of Homer, and several other great names, to keep me in countenance ; and the critics will tell you this irregular manner has its beauties : but, upon my word, it is a beauty I had not at all in my view.”

AN example of a similar brevity of expression, which admits of no imitation in

English, occurs in another letter of Cicero to Trebatius, (Ep. l. 7. 14.)

*Chrysippus Vettius, Cyri architecti libertus, fecit, ut te non immemorem putarem mei. Valde jam laetus es qui gravere literas ad me dare, homine præsertim domestico. Quod si scribere oblitus es, minus multi jam te ad vocato causâ cadent. Sin nostri oblitus es, dabo operam ut isthuc veniam, antequam planè ex animo tuo effluo.*

IN translating this passage, Mr Melmoth has shewn equal judgment. Without attempting to imitate the brevity of the original, which he knew to be impossible, he saw, that the characterising features of the passage were ease and vivacity; and these he has very happily transfused into his translation.

“ If it were not for the compliments you  
“ sent me by Chrysippus, the freedman of  
“ Cyrus the architect, I should have imagi-  
“ ned I no longer possessed a place in your  
“ thoughts. But surely you are become a

“ most intolerable fine gentleman, that you  
“ could not bear the fatigue of writing to  
“ me, when you had the opportunity of do-  
“ ing so by a man, whom, you know, I look  
“ upon as one almost of my own family.  
“ Perhaps, however, you may have forgot-  
“ ten the use of your pen: and so much  
“ the better, let me tell you, for your clients,  
“ as they will lose no more causes by its  
“ blunders. But if it is myself only that  
“ has escaped your remembrance, I must  
“ endeavour to refresh it by a visit, before  
“ I am worn out of your memory, beyond  
“ all power of recollection.”

NUMBERLESS instances of a similar exer-  
cise of judgment and of good taste are to be  
found in Mr Murphy's excellent translation  
of Tacitus. After the death of Germanicus,  
poisoned, as was suspected, by Piso, with  
the tacit approbation of Tiberius, the public  
loudly demanded justice against the suppos-  
ed murderer, and the cause was solemnly  
tried in the Roman Senate. Piso, foresee-  
ing a judgment against him, chose to anti-  
cipate his fate by a voluntary death. The

Senate decreed, that his family name should be abolished for ever, and that his brother Marcus should be banished from his country for ten years; but in deference to the solicitations of the Empress, they granted a free pardon to Plancina, his widow. Tacitus proceeds to relate, that this sentence of the Senate was altered by Tiberius: *Multa ex ea sententia mitigata sunt a principe; ne namen Pionis fastis eximeretur, quando M. Antonii, qui bellum patriæ fecisset, Julius Antonii, qui domum Augusti violasset, manerent; et M. Pisonem ignominiae excusit, concessitque ei paterna bona; satius firmus, ut sœpe memoravi, adversus pecuniam; et tum pudore absolutæ Plancina placabilior. Atque idem cum Valerius Messalinus signum aureum in æde Martis Ultoris, Cæcina Severus aram ultiæ statuendam censuerunt, prohibuit: ob externas ea viætorias sacrari dictitans, domestica mala tristitia operienda.* An. I. 3, c. 18.

Thus necessarily amplified, and translated with the ease of original composition, by Mr Murphy:

“ This sentence, in many particulars,  
“ was mitigated by Tiberius. The family  
“ name, he said, ought not to be abolished,  
“ while that of Mark Antony, who appear-  
“ ed in arms against his country, as well  
“ as that of Julius Antonius, who by his in-  
“ trigues dishonoured the house of Augus-  
“ tus, subsisted still, and figured in the Ro-  
“ man annals. Marcus Piso was left in  
“ possession of his civil dignities, and his  
“ father’s fortune. Avarice, as has been  
“ already observed, was not the passion of  
“ Tiberius. On this occasion, the disgrace  
“ incurred by the partiality shown to Plan-  
“ cina, softened his temper, and made him  
“ the more willing to extend his mercy to  
“ the son. Valerius Messalinus moved,  
“ that a golden statue might be erected in  
“ the temple of Mars the Avenger. An  
“ altar to Vengeance was proposed by Cæ-  
“ cina Severus. Both these motions were  
“ over-ruled by the Emperor. The prin-  
“ ciple on which he argued, was, that public  
“ monuments, however proper in cases of  
“ foreign conquest, were not suited to the  
“ present juncture. Domestic calamity

“ should be lamented, and as soon as possible consigned to oblivion.”

THE conclusion of the same chapter affords an example yet more striking of the same necessary and happy amplification by the translator.

*Addiderat Messalinus, Tiberio et Augustæ, et Antoniæ, et Agrippinæ, Drusoque, ob vindictam Germanici grates agendas, omiseratque Claudii mentionem; et Messalinum quidem L. Aspernas senatu coram percunctatus est, an prudens præterisset? Ac tum demum nomen Claudii adscriptum est. Mihi quanto plura recentium, seu veterum revolve, tanto magis ludibria rerum mortalium cunctis in negotiis obversantur; quippe fama, spe, veneratione potius omnes destinabant imperio, quam quem futurum principem fortuna in occulto tenebat.*

“ MESSALINUS added to his motion a vote of thanks to Tiberius and Livia, to Antonia, Agrippina, and Drusus, for their zeal in bringing to justice the enemies of

“ Germanicus. The name of Claudius was  
“ not mentioned. Lucius Asperanus desired  
“ to know, whether that omission was intend-  
“ ed. The consequence was, that Claudius  
“ was inserted in the vote. Upon an occasion  
“ like this, it is impossible not to pause for  
“ a moment, to make a reflection that na-  
“ turally rises out of the subject. When  
“ we review what has been doing in the  
“ world, is it not evident, that in all trans-  
“ actions, whether of ancient or of modern  
“ date, some strange caprice of fortune turns  
“ all human wisdom to a jest? In the junc-  
“ ture before us, Claudius figured so little  
“ on the stage of public business, that there  
“ was scarce a man in Rome, who did not  
“ seem, by the voice of fame and the wish-  
“ es of the people, designed for the sove-  
“ reign power, rather than the very person,  
“ whom fate, in that instant, cherished in  
“ obscurity, to make him, at a future pe-  
“ riod, master of the Roman world.”

So likewise in the following passage, we must admire the judgment of the translator in forbearing all attempt to rival the bre-

vity of the original, since he knew it could not be attained but with the sacrifice both of ease and perspicuity :

*Is finis fuit ulciscenda Germanici morte,  
non modo apud illos homines qui tum agebant,  
etiam secutis temporibus vario rumore jac-  
tata; adeo maxima quæque ambigua sunt,  
dum alii quoquo modo auditæ pro compe-  
tis habent; alii vera in contrarium vertunt;  
et gliscit utrumque posteritate.* An. l. 3.  
c. 19.

“ In this manner ended the inquiry con-  
“ cerning the death of Germanicus; a sub-  
“ ject which has been variously represent-  
“ ed, not only by men of that day, but by  
“ all subsequent writers. It remains, to  
“ this hour, the problem of history. A  
“ cloud for ever hangs over the most im-  
“ portant transactions; while, on the one  
“ hand, credulity adopts for fact the report  
“ of the day; and, on the other, politicians  
“ warp and disguise the truth\* : between

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\* There is a slight impropriety of language in opposing abstract term, *credulity* to *politicians*; even allowing that

“ both parties two different accounts go  
“ down from age to age, and gain strength  
“ with posterity.”

IN the same parallel with Melmoth and with Murphy, as possessing a masterly skill in the true principles of the art, must be ranked the ingenious translator of *Sallust* \* ; whose elaborate work, the version of a most difficult author, into easy, pure, correct, and often most eloquent language, has justly entitled him to a high rank among the English translators from the classics. Observing in general a very strict fidelity to the sense of his original, he saw at once

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the former is a personification : for simple and figurative expression do not happily combine.

\* *Henry Steuart, Esq; of Allanton, a Scottish gentleman of ancient family, who most laudably employs his leisure in the elegant and manly pursuits of classical science and polite letters. The translation of *Sallust* is printed for Messrs Baldwin, in 2 vols. 4to, 1806. The accompanying essays on the life and writings of the historian, with the historical and critical notes, contain altogether a great store of ingenious criticism and classical information.*

the fruitlessness of any attempt to imitate the abrupt and sententious manner, together with those other prominent characteristics of the style of Sallust, which, although the natural partiality to his author has led him to vindicate and even to panegyris, he well knew the utter impossibility of transferring to a language widely different in its structure and idioms from that of the original. This attempt, therefore, he has with great judgment altogether abandoned; limiting himself to the correct expression of the sense of his author, in pure and eloquent language, possessing all the ease of original composition.

MR Steuart's translation of the following passage appears to me to be executed with singular felicity: *At populo Romano nunquam ea copia fuit: quia prudentissimus quisque negotiosus maximè erat. Ingenium nemo sine corpore exercebat: optimus quisque facere quam dicere, et sua ab aliis benefacta laudari, quam ipse aliorum narrare malebat. Igitur domi militiæque boni mores colebantur. Concordia maxima, minima avaritia erat: jus*

*bonumque apud eos non legibus magis quam natura valebat : jurgia, discordias, iras, similitates cum hostibus exercebant ; cives cum civibus de virtute certabant. In suppliciis Deorum magnifici, domi parci, in amicos fidèles erant. Duabus his artibus audacia in bello, ubi pax evenerat, æquitate, seque remque publicam curabant.*

“ AMONG the Romans, the same advantages have not been enjoyed. Here few writers arose during the early ages. The most busy scenes constantly called forth the brightest talents : and even the distinctions were long unknown, that separate active from speculative life. To act, rather than to write or speak, was then the practice. The Roman of other times preferred the glory of deeds which he himself should achieve, to that of recounting and embellishing the achievements of other men. Thus at home and abroad the Roman manners were adorned with a virtuous simplicity. The voice of dissention and the suggestions of avarice, were never heard. Justice and equity

“ were then the dictates of nature, and the  
“ offspring of sentiment : the terrors of the  
“ law were seldom necessary to enforce  
“ them. Rancour, animosity and fierce  
“ contention, our forefathers reserved for  
“ the enemies of their country. Among  
“ themselves, it was the struggle of citizens  
“ for the palm of superior excellence. In  
“ their offerings to the Gods, they obser-  
“ ved a pious magnificence ; in their own  
“ habitations a modest frugality ; to their  
“ friends a fidelity which was unshaken and  
“ inviolable. Their maxims were few and  
“ simple ; valour in war, and in peace equi-  
“ ty and moderation, formed the leading  
“ principles of their conduct. By means  
“ of these they maintained the honour of  
“ the republic, by communicating to it the  
“ energy of their own character.”

IN the original of this passage, a brief and sententious antithesis runs through the whole ; evidently the effect of art and study, and therefore unpleasant from the sense of the labour which the author has bestowed upon it. The translator has with much

judgment refrained from all imitation of this abrupt and disjointed sententiousness; while in correct and eloquent language he has given the full meaning, with more ease than belongs to his original. In proof of the above remark, let the reader attend particularly to the version of *Ingenium nemo sine corpore exercebat—jurgia, discordias, iras, similitates cum hostibus exercebant : cives cum civibus de virtute certabant.*

IN his version of the following passage, the translator has evinced the same ability, with an equal degree of good taste, in happily amplifying, without adding to the thought of his author, where it was impossible to do justice to the original by any imitation of its compressed and antithetical brevity.

*Sed primò magis ambitio quam avaritia animos hominum exercebat, quod tamen vitium proprius virtutem erat. Nam gloriam, honorem, imperium, bonus et ignavus aequè sibi exoptant. Sed ille verà nititur vidè : huic quia bonæ artes desunt, dolis atque fallacīs*

*contendit. Avaritia pecunia studium habet, quam nemo sapiens concupivit : ea quasi venenis malis imbuita, corpus virile animumque effeminit. Semper infinita, insatiabilis est, neque copia neque inopia minuitur.*

“ IN the first stages of corruption, it was  
“ ambition, and not avarice, that laid the  
“ strongest hold on the minds of men ;  
“ and this in the order of things was natu-  
“ rally to be expected. Ambition, being of  
“ the two, more a-kin to virtue, its indul-  
“ gence may admit of a specious apology.  
“ The heights of power, and the prize of  
“ glory or honour, alike stimulate the good  
“ and the worthless. But the former pur-  
“ sue the straight road to their object ; the  
“ latter, being strangers to every honourable  
“ feeling, turn aside into the paths of arti-  
“ fice and fraud. Avarice, on the other  
“ hand, sets its affection on riches, a pos-  
“ session that no wise man ever immod-  
“ erately coveted. In avarice there is a sor-  
“ did principle, from which ambition is ex-  
“ empt. It possesses, so to speak, the most  
“ poisonous qualities ; of power not only

“ to effeminate the body, but to depress  
“ the faculties of the soul. It is a flame  
“ that unceasingly burns ; and whether it  
“ be fed by plenty or starved by want, con-  
“ tinues equally unquenchable.

If I have said less in praise of this excellent translation of a most difficult classic author than its uncommon merits justly call for, the ingenious author has himself in some measure to blame for the reserve which he compels me to maintain, in speaking of a work in which he has honoured this Essay with unbounded encomium.

THE French language admits of a brevity of expression more corresponding to that of the Latin : and of this D'Alembert has given many happy examples in his translations from Tacitus.

*Quod si vita suppeditet, principatum divi  
Nervo et imperium Trajani, uberiorem, se-  
curoremque materiam senectuti seposui : rara  
temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quæ velis, et*

*quæ sentias dicere licet.* Praef. ad Hist. " Si  
" les dieux m'accordent des jours, je de-  
" stine à l'occupation et à la consolation  
" de ma vieillesse, l'histoire interessante et  
" tranquille de Nerva et de Trajan; tems  
" heureux et rares, où l'on est libre de pen-  
" ser et de parler."

AND with equal, perhaps superior felicity, the same passage is thus translated by Rousseau: " Que s'il me reste assez de vie, je reserve pour ma vieillesse la riche et paisible matiere des regnes de Nerva et de Trajan: rares et heureux tems, où l'on peut penser librement, et dire ce que l'on pense."

BUT D'Alembert, from too earnest a desire to imitate the conciseness of his original, has sometimes left the sense imperfect. Of this an example occurs in the passage before quoted, An. l. l. d. 2. *Cum cœteri nobilium, quanto quis servitio promptior, opibus et honoribus extollerentur*: the translator, too studious of brevity, has not given the complete idea of his author, " Le reste

“ des nobles trouvoit dans les richesses et  
“ dans les honneurs, la récompense de l'es-  
“ clavage.” This does not convey the sense  
of the original, “ that riches and honours  
“ were bestowed on the courtiers, *in pro-*  
“ *portion to their degrees of servility.*” *Omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset,*  
Tac. hist. 1. 49. “ Digne de l'empire au  
“ jugement de tout le monde, tant qu'il ne  
“ regna pas.” This is not the idea of the  
author ; for Tacitus does not mean to say  
that Galba was judged worthy of the em-  
pire till he attained to it ; but that all the  
world would have thought him worthy of  
the empire if he had never attained to it.

2. THE Latin and Greek languages ad-  
mit of inversions which are inconsistent with  
the genius of the English :

Mr Gordon, injudiciously aiming at an  
imitation of the Latin construction, has gi-  
ven a barbarous air to his translation of  
Tacitus : “ To Pallas, who was by Claudius  
“ declared to be the deviser of this scheme,  
“ the ornaments of the prætorship, and

“ three hundred seventy-five thousand  
“ crowns, were adjudged by Bareas Soranus  
“ consul designed,” *An. b. 12.*—“ Still to  
“ be seen are the Roman standards in the  
“ German groves, there, by me, hung up,”  
*An. lib. 1.* “ Naturally violent was the spi-  
“ rit of Arminius, and now, by the capti-  
“ vity of his wife, and by the fate of his  
“ child, doomed to bondage though yet un-  
“ born, enraged even to distraction.” *Ibid.*  
“ But he, the more ardent he found the af-  
“ fections of the soldiers, and the greater the  
“ hatred of his uncle, so much the more  
“ intent upon a decisive victory, weighed  
“ with himself all the methods,” &c. *Ib.*  
*lib. 2.*

THUS, Mr Macpherson, in his translation of Homer, (a work otherwise valuable, as containing for the most part a faithful transfusion of the sense of his author), has generally adopted an inverted construction, which is incompatible with the genius of the English language. “ Tlepolemus, the race  
“ of Hercules,—brave in battle and great in  
“ arms, nine ships led to Troy, with mag-

“ unanimous Rhodians filled. Those who  
“ dwelt in Rhodes, distinguished in nations  
“ three,—who held Lindus, Ialyssus, and  
“ white Camirus, beheld him afar.—Their  
“ leader in arms was Tlepolemus, renown-  
“ ed at the spear, *Il. l. 2.*—The heroes the  
“ slaughter began.—Alexander first a war-  
“ rior slew—Through the neck, by the helm  
“ passed the steel.—Iphinous, the son of  
“ Dexius, through the shoulder he pierced  
“ —to the earth fell the chief in his blood,  
“ *Il. l. 7.* Not unjustly we Hector admire;  
“ matchless at launching the spear; to  
“ break the line of battle, bold, *Il. l. 5.*  
“ Nor for vows unpaid rages Apollo; nor  
“ solemn sacrifice denied.” *Il. l. 1.*

3. THE English language is not incapable of an elliptical mode of expression; but it does not admit of it to the same degree as the Latin. Tacitus says, *Trepida civitas in-  
cusare Tiberium*, for *trepida civitas incepit  
incusare Tiberium*. We cannot say in English, “ The terrified city to blame Tiberius:” And even as Gordon has translated these words, the ellipsis is too violent

for the English language ; “ hence against  
“ Tiberius many complaints.”

Ἐνημαρ μὲν ἀνὰ σφατὸν ὥχετο κῆλα θεοῖς.

Il. lib. 1. l. 53.

“ For nine days the arrows of the god  
“ were darted through the army.” The  
elliptical brevity of Mr Macpherson’s trans-  
lation of this verse, has no parallel in the  
original ; nor is it agreeable to the English  
idiom :

“ Nine days rush the shafts of the God.”

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*Whether a Poem can be well translated into  
Prose.*

FROM all the preceding observations respecting the imitation of style, we may derive this precept, That a translator ought always to figure to himself, in what manner the original author would have expressed himself, if he had written in the language of the translation.

THIS precept leads to the examination, and probably to the decision, of a question which has admitted of some dispute, Whether a poem can be well translated into prose?

THERE are certain species of poetry, of which the chief merit consists in the sweetness and melody of the versification. Of these it is evident, that the very essence must perish in translating them into prose. What should we find in the following beautiful lines, when divested of the melody of verse ?

She said, and melting as in tears she lay,  
In a soft silver stream dissolv'd away.  
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,  
For ever murmurs, and for ever weeps ;  
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,  
And bathes the forest where she rang'd before.

POPE'S *Windsor Forest.*

BUT a great deal of the beauty of every regular poem, consists in the melody of its numbers. Sensible of this truth, many of the prose translators of poetry, have attempted to give a sort of measure to their prose, which removes it from the nature of ordinary language. If this measure is uniform, and its return regular, the composition is no longer prose, but blank-verse. If it is not uniform, and does not regularly return

upon the ear, the composition will be more unharmonious, than if the measure had been entirely neglected. Of this, Mr Macpherson's translation of the *Iliad* is a strong example.

But it is not only by the measure that poetry is distinguishable from prose. It is by the character of its thoughts and sentiments, and by the nature of that language in which they are clothed \*. A boldness of figures, a luxuriancy of imagery, a frequent use of metaphors, a quickness of transition, a liberty of digressing; all these are not only *allowable* in poetry, but to many species of it, *essential*. But they are quite unsuitable to the character of prose. When seen in a *prose translation*, they appear preposterous and out of place, because they are never found in an *original prose composition*.

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\* "C'est en quoi consiste le grand art de la Poësie, de dire figurément presque tout ce qu'elle dit." *Rapin Reflex. sur la Poëtique en général*, § 29.

IN opposition to these remarks, it may be urged, that there are examples of poems originally composed in prose, as Fenelon's *Telemachus*. But to this we answer, that Fenelon, in composing his *Telemachus*, has judiciously adopted nothing more of the characteristics of poetry than what might safely be given to a prose composition. His good taste prescribed to him certain limits, which he was under no necessity of transgressing. But a translator is not left to a similar freedom of judgment: he must follow the footsteps of his original. Fenelon's Epic Poem is of a very different character from the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, or the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. The French author has, in the conduct of his fable, seldom transgressed the bounds of historic probability; he has sparingly indulged himself in the use of the Epic machinery; and there is a chastity and sobriety even in his language, very different from the glowing enthusiasm that characterizes the diction of the poems we have mentioned: We find nothing in the *Telemaque* of the *Os magna sonaturum*.

THE difficulty of translating poetry into prose, is different in its degree, according to the nature or species of the poem. Didactic poetry, of which the principal merit consists in the detail of a regular system, or in rational precepts which flow from each other in a connected train of thought, will evidently suffer least by being transfused into prose. But every didactic poet judiciously enriches his work with such ornaments as are not strictly attached to his subject. In a prose translation of such a poem, all that is strictly systematic or preceptive may be transfused with propriety ; all the rest, which belongs to embellishment, will be found impertinent and out of place. Of this we have a convincing proof in Dryden's translation of the valuable poem of Du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphicu*. The didactic parts of the poem are translated with becoming propriety ; but in the midst of those practical instructions in the art of painting, how preposterous appear in prose such passages as the following ?

“ THOSE things which the poets have  
“ thought unworthy of their pens, the paint-  
“ ers have judged to be unworthy of their  
“ pencils. For both those arts, that they  
“ might advance the sacred honours of re-  
“ ligion, have raised themselves to heaven ;  
“ and having found a free admission into the  
“ palace of Jove himself, have enjoyed the  
“ sight and conversation of the Gods, whose  
“ awful majesty they observe, and whose  
“ dictates they communicate to mankind,  
“ whom, at the same time, they inspire with  
“ those celestial flames which shine so glo-  
“ riously in their works.”

“ BESIDES all this, you are to express the  
“ motions of the spirits, and the affections  
“ or passions, whose centre is the heart.  
“ This is that in which the greatest difficul-  
“ ty consists. Few there are whom Jupi-  
“ ter regards with a favourable eye in this  
“ undertaking.”

“ AND as this part, (the Art of Colour-  
“ ing), which we may call the utmost per-  
“ fection of Painting, is a deceiving beauty,

“ but withal soothing and pleasing ; so she  
“ has been accused of procuring lovers for  
“ her sister (Design), and artfully engaging  
“ us to admire her.”

BUT there are certain species of poetry, of the merits of which it will be found impossible to convey the smallest idea in a prose translation. Such is Lyric poetry, where a greater degree of irregularity of thought, and a more unrestrained exuberance of fancy, is allowable than in any other species of composition. To attempt, therefore, a translation of a lyric poem into prose, is the most absurd of all undertakings ; for those very characters of the original which are essential to it, and which constitute its highest beauties, if transferred to a prose translation, become unpardonable blemishes. The excursive range of the sentiments, and the play of fancy, which we admire in the original, degenerate in the translation into mere raving and impertinence. Of this the translation of Horace in prose, by Smart, furnishes proofs in every page.

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We may certainly, from the foregoing observations, conclude, that it is impossible to do complete justice to any species of poetical composition in a prose translation ; in other words, that none but a poet can translate a poet.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Third General Rule—A Translation should have all the Ease of Original Composition.—Extreme difficulty in the observance of this Rule.—Contrasted Instances of Success and Failure.—Of the Necessity of sometimes sacrificing one Rule to another.*

It now remains, that we consider the third general law of Translation.

In order that the merit of the original work may be so completely transfused as to produce its full effect, it is necessary, not only that the translation should contain a perfect transcript of the sentiments of the original, and present likewise a resemblance

of its style and manner ; but, That the translation should have all the ease of original composition.

WHEN we consider those restraints within which a translator finds himself necessarily confined, with regard to the sentiments and manner of his original, it will soon appear, that this last requisite includes the most difficult part of his task \*. It is not

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\* " Quand il s'agit de représenter dans une autre langue  
" les choses, les pensées, les expressions, les tours, les tons  
" d'un ouvrage ; les choses telles qu'elles sont, sans rien ajou-  
" ter, ni retrancher, ni déplacer ; les pensées dans leurs cou-  
" leurs, leurs degrés, leurs nuances ; les tours, qui donnent la  
" feu, l'esprit, et la vie au discours ; les expressions natu-  
" relles, figurées, fortes, riches, gracieuses, délicates, &c. le  
" tout d'après un modèle qui commande durement, et qui  
" veut qu'on lui obéisse d'un air aisé ; il faut, sinon autant de  
" génie, du moins autant de goût pour bien traduire, que pour  
" composer. Peut-être même en faut-il davantage. L'auteur qui  
" compose, conduit seulement par une sorte d'instinct toujours  
" libre, et par sa matière qui lui présente des idées, qu'il peut  
" accepter ou rejeter à son gré, est maître absolu de ses pen-  
" sées et de ses expressions : si la pensée ne lui convient pas,  
" ou si l'expression ne convient pas à la pensée, il peut rejeter,  
" l'une et l'autre ; *quæ desperat tractata nescere posse, relin-*

easy for one who walks in trammels, to exhibit an air of grace and freedom. It is difficult, even for a capital painter, to preserve in a copy of a picture all the ease and spirit of the original ; yet the painter employs precisely the same colours, and has no other care than faithfully to imitate the touch and manner of the picture that is before him. If the original is easy and graceful, the copy will have the same qualities, in proportion as the imitation is just and perfect. The translator's task is very different : He uses not the same colours with the original, but is required to give his picture the same force and effect. He is not allowed to copy the touches of the original, yet is required, by

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“ *quit.* Le traducteur n'est maître de rien ; il est obligé de  
“ suivre partout son auteur, et de se plier à toutes ses varia-  
“ tions avec une souplesse infinie. Qu'on en juge par la va-  
“ riété des tons qui se trouvent nécessairement dans une  
“ même sujet, et à plus forte raison dans un même genre.—  
“ Quelle idée donc ne doit-on pas avoir d'une traduction faite  
“ avec succès ?”

*BATTREUX, De la Construction Oratoire, Par. 2.*

touches of his own, to produce a perfect resemblance. The more he studies a scrupulous imitation, the less his copy will reflect the ease and spirit of the original. How then shall a translator accomplish this difficult union of ease with fidelity? To use a bold expression, he must adopt the very soul of his author, which must speak through his own organs \*.

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\* The following observations by Cowper, though loosely thrown out, and a little deficient in precision of thought, contain much matter deserving of a translator's attention: "There are *minutiae* in every language, which, transfused into another, will spoil the version. Such extreme fidelity is in fact unfaithful. Such close resemblance takes away all likeness. The original is elegant, easy, natural; the copy is clumsy, constrained, unnatural: To what is this owing? To the adoption of terms not congenial to your purpose, and of a context such as no man writing an original work would make use of. Homer is every thing that a poet should be. A translation of Homer so made will be every thing a translation of Homer should not be. Because it will be written in no language under heaven. It will be English, and it will be Greek, and therefore it will be neither. He is the man, whoever he be, (I do not pretend to be that man myself,) he is the man best qualified as a translator of Homer, who has drenched, and steeped, and soaked himself in the effusions of his genius,

LET US proceed to exemplify this third rule of translation, which regards the attainment of ease of style, by instances both of success and failure.

## o 3

“ till he has imbibed their colour to the bone, and who,  
“ when he is thus dyed through and through, distinguishing  
“ between what is essentially Greek and what may be ha-  
“ bited in English, rejects the former, and is faithful to the  
“ latter, as far as the purposes of fine poetry will permit,  
“ and no farther: this, I think, may be easily proved. Ho-  
“ mer is every where remarkable either for ease, dignity, or  
“ energy of expression; for grandeur of conception, and a  
“ majestic flow of numbers. If we copy him so closely as  
“ to make every one of these excellent properties of his ab-  
“ solutely unattainable, which will certainly be the effect of  
“ too close a copy, instead of translating, we murder him.  
“ Therefore, after all\*\*\*\*\*has said, I still hold freedom  
“ to be indispensable. Freedom I mean with respect to  
“ the expression; freedom so limited, as never to leave be-  
“ hind the matter; but at the same time indulged with a  
“ sufficient scope to secure the spirit, and as much as pos-  
“ sible of the manner. I say as much as possible, because  
“ an English manner must differ from a Greek one, in order  
“ to be graceful, and for this there is no remedy: Can an  
“ ungraceful, awkward translation of Homer be a good one?  
“ No: but a graceful, easy, natural, faithful version of him,  
“ will not that be a good one? Yes: Allow me but this, and  
“ I insist upon it, that such a one may be produced on any  
“ principles, and can be produced on no other.”

*COWPER's Letters.*

THE familiar style of epistolary correspondence is rarely attainable even in original composition. It consists in a delicate medium between the perfect freedom of ordinary conversation and the regularity of written dissertation or narrative. It is extremely difficult to attain this delicate medium in a translation: because the writer has neither a freedom of choice in the sentiments, nor in the mode of expressing them. Mr Melmoth appears to me to be a great model in this respect. His Translations of the Epistles of Cicero and of Pliny have all the ease of the originals, while they present in general a very faithful transcript of his author's sense.

“ Surely, *my friend*, your couriers are a  
“ set of the most unconscionable fellows.  
“ Not that they have given me any parti-  
“ cular offence; but as they never bring  
“ me a letter when they arrive here, is it  
“ fair, they should always press me for one  
“ when they return?” *Melmoth, Cic. Ep.*

**10. 20.**

*Præposteros habes tabellarios ; etsi me quidem non offendunt. Sed tamen cum a me discedunt, flagitant literas, cum ad me veniunt, nullas afferunt.* Cic. Ep. 1. 15. ep. 17.

“ Is it not more worthy of your mighty ambition, to be blended with your learned brethren at Rome, than to stand the sole great wonder of wisdom amidst a parcel of paltry provincials ? ” Melmoth, Cic. Ep. 2. 23.

*Velim—ibi malis esse ubi aliquo numero sis, quam isthic ubi solus sapere videare.* Cic. Epist. 1. 1. ep. 10.

“ In short, I plainly perceive your families are in no flourishing situation, and I expect to hear the same account of all your neighbours ; so that famine, my friend, most formidable famine, must be your fate, if you do not provide against it in due time. And since you have been reduced to sell your horse, e'en mount your mule, (the only animal, it seems, belonging to you, which you have not yet sacri-

“ ficed to your table), and convey yourself  
“ immediately to Rome. To encourage you  
“ to do so, you shall be honoured with a  
“ chair and cushion next to mine, and sit  
“ the second great pedagogue in my cele-  
“ brated school.” *Melmoth, Cic. Ep. 8. 22.*

*Video te bona perdidisse : spero idem ist-  
huc familiares tuos. Actum igitur de te est,  
nisi provides. Potes mulo isto quem tibi re-  
liquum dicis esse (quando cantherium come-  
disti) Romam pervehi. Sella tibi erit in  
ludo, tanquam hypodidascalο ; proxima eam  
pulvinus sequitur.* *Cic. Ep. 1. 9. ep. 18.*

“ ARE you not a pleasant mortal, to que-  
“ stion me concerning the fate of those  
“ estates you mention, when Balbus had  
“ just before been paying you a visit ?”  
*Melmoth, Cic. Ep. 8. 24.*

*Non tu homo ridiculus es, qui cum Bal-  
bus noster apud te fuerit, ex me queras quid  
de istis municipiis et agris futurum putem ?*  
*Cic. Ep. 9. 17.*

“ *And now I have raised your expectations of this piece, I doubt you will be disappointed when it comes to your hands. In the meanwhile, however, you may expect it, as something that will please you: And who knows but it may?*”

Plin. Ep. 8. 3.

*Erexer expectationem tuam; quam vereor ne destituat oratio in manus sumpta. Interim tamen, tanquam placituram, et fortasse placebit, expecta.* Plin. Ep. 8. 3.

“ *I consent to undertake the cause which you so earnestly recommend to me; but as glorious and honourable as it may be, I will not be your counsel without a fee. Is it possible, you will say, that my friend Pliny should be so mercenary? In truth it is; and I insist upon a reward, which will do me more honour than the most disinterested patronage.*” Plin. Ep. 6. 23.

*Impensè petis ut agam causam pertinentem ad curam tuam, pulchram alioquin et famo-*

*sam. Faciam, sed non gratis. Qui fieri potest (inquis) ut non gratis tu? Potest: exigam enim mercedem honestiorem gratuito patrocinio.* Plin. Ep. 8. 3.

To these examples of the ease of epistolary correspondence, I add a passage from one of the orations of Cicero, which is yet in a strain of greater familiarity: “A certain mechanic—*What's his name?*—Oh, “ *I'm obliged to you for helping me to it:* “ *Yes, I mean Polycletus.*” *Melmoth.*

*Artificem—quemnam? Recte admores.*  
*Polycletum esse ducebant.* Cicero, Orat. 2.  
in Verrem.

IN the preceding instances from Mr Melmoth, the words of the English translation which are marked in Italics, are those which, in my opinion, give it the ease of original composition.

SOMETIMES, though very rarely, Mr Melmoth fails to rival the ease and spirit of his model. The following passage from one of

Pliny's Epistles has an uncommon felicity of expression in the original. Pliny thus jocularly remonstrates with his friend Præsens, for passing so much of his time in the country: *Quousque regnabis? Quousque vigilabis quum voles? dormies quamdiu voles? quousque calcei nusquam? toga feriata? liber toto dies? Tempus est te revisere molestias nostras, vel ob hoc solum, ne voluptates istæ satietae languescant.* Ep. lib. vii. 3.

“ Are you obstinately bent to live your  
“ own master, and sleep and rise when you  
“ think proper? Will you never change  
“ your country dress for the habit of the  
“ town, but spend your whole days unem-  
“ barrassed by business? It is time, how-  
“ ver, you should revisit our scene of hurry,  
“ were it only that your rural pleasures may  
“ not grow languid by enjoyment,” *Mel-  
moth's Pliny.*

THE looseness of this version, and at the same time its insipidity, when contrasted with the happy ease and familiarity of the original, would almost incline us to suspect,

that in this instance the translator had not fully apprehended his author's meaning. The sense, at least, if not the full spirit of the passage, may be thus more faithfully given :

“ How long must you enjoy the royal  
“ privilege of idleness—sleep when you  
“ please, and wake when you please—  
“ saunter the livelong day, with your book  
“ in your hand ; in all the comfort of an old  
“ coat, and a pair of easy shoes ; your town  
“ accoutrements and dress-pumps gone,  
“ the Lord knows where, and not to be  
“ found for love or money ?—For heaven's  
“ sake, come and taste of our turmoils :  
“ seek something to plague you, were it  
“ only to give a zest to your happiness.”

BUT while a translator endeavours to transmute into his work all the ease of the original, the most correct taste is requisite to prevent that ease from degenerating into licentiousness. I have, in treating of the imitation of style and manner, given some examples of the want of this taste. The most licentious of all translators was Mr Thomas

Brown, of facetious memory, in whose translations from Lucian we have the most perfect ease; but it is the ease of Billingsgate and of Wapping. I shall contrast a few passages of his translation of this author, with those of another translator, who has given a faithful transcript of the sense of his original, but from an over-scrupulous fidelity has failed a little in point of ease.

**GNATHON.** “ What now ! Timon, do  
“ you strike me ? Bear witness, Hercules !  
“ O me, O me ! But I will call you into  
“ the Areopagus for this. **TIMON,** Stay a  
“ little only, and you may bring me in  
“ guilty of murder \*.” **FRANCKLIN**’s *Lucian*.

**GNATHON :** “ Confound him ! what a  
“ blow he has given me ! What’s this for,

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\* FN. Τι τότε ; παιίς ἡ Τίμων ; μαρτύρουμαι ἡ Ήρακλεις· ίον.  
ιον. Προκαλέμαι οι τραίνεταις οις Λειποι πάγοις. **TIM.** Καὶ μὴ ἡ,  
η μικροι πειθαρεδυτης, Φέρου τάχι πρωκτάροι με. **LUCIAN,** Τί-  
μων.

“ old Touchwood? Bear witness, Hercules,  
 “ that he has struck me. I warrant you, I  
 “ shall make you repent of this blow. I'll  
 “ indite you upon an action of the case, and  
 “ bring you *coram nobis* for an assault and  
 “ battery.” *Timon*: “ Do, thou confound-  
 “ ed law-pimp, do; but if thou stayest one  
 “ minute longer, I'll beat thee to pap. I'll  
 “ make thy bones rattle in thee, like three  
 “ blue beans in a blue bladder. Go, stink-  
 “ ard, or else I shall make you alter your  
 “ action, and get me indicted for manslaugh-  
 “ ter.” *Timon, trans. by Brown in Dryden's Lucian.*

“ ON the whole, a most perfect charac-  
 “ ter; we shall see presently, with all his  
 “ modesty, what a bawling he will make.”  
 FRANCKLIN's *Lucian, Timon*\*.

“ IN fine, he's a person that knows the  
 “ world better than any one, and is extreme-

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\* Καὶ ὅλος πάντοφες τὸ χρῆμα, καὶ παντεχόεν ἀκριβὲς, καὶ πολι-  
 λάς ἴστολές· αἰματίσσας ταυγαρέν τὸν μαντόν χειρὸς ἐν. LUCIAN,  
*Timon*.

“ ly well acquainted with the whole *Encyclopædia* of villainy ; a true elaborate finished rascal ; and for all he appears so demure now, that you'd think butter would not melt in his mouth, yet I shall soon make him open his pipes, and roar like a persecuted bear.” DRYDEN’s *Lucian, Timon.*

“ HE changes his name, and instead of Byria, Dromo, or Tibius, now takes the name of Megacles, or Megabyzus, or Pro-tarchus, leaving the rest of the expectants gaping and looking at one another in silent sorrow.” FRANCKLIN’s *Lucian, Timon* \*.

“ STRAIGHT he changes his name, so that the rascal, who the moment before had no other title about the house, but, you son of a whore, you bulk-begotten cur, you scoundrel, must now be called his

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\* Αὐτὶ τὸ τὸν Πυρρίν, ἦ Δρίκανος, ἦ Τιβίς, Μογικλῆς, ἦ Μογίβριξ, ἦ Περίστροχος μετανομασθεὶς, τὸς μάτετος καρχαρότας ἵππος εἰς ἄλλην ληνὸς ἀποβλοττοτας καταλιπὼν, δ.τ. *LUCIAN, Timon.*

“ worship, his excellency, and the Lord  
“ knows what. The best on’t is, that this  
“ mushroom puts all these fellows noses out  
“ of joint.” &c. DRYDEN’s *Lucian, Timon*.

From these contrasted specimens we may decide, that the one translation of Lucian errs perhaps as much on the score of restraint, as the other on that of licentiousness. The preceding examples from Melmoth point out, in my opinion, the just medium of free and spirited translation, for the attainment of which the most correct taste is requisite.

If the order in which I have classed the three general laws of translation be their just and natural arrangement, which I think will hardly be denied, it will follow, that in all cases where a sacrifice is necessary to be made of one of those laws to another, a due regard ought to be paid to their rank and comparative importance. The different genius of the languages of the original and translation, will sometimes make

it necessary to depart from the manner of the original, in order to convey a faithful picture of the sense ; but it would be highly preposterous to depart, in any case, from the sense, for the sake of imitating the manner. Equally improper would it be, to sacrifice either the sense or manner of the original, (if these can be preserved consistently with purity of expression), to a fancied ease or superior gracefulness of composition. This last is the fault of the French translations of D'Ablancourt, an author otherwise of very high merit. His versions are admirable, so long as we forbear to compare them with the originals : they are models of ease, of elegance, and perspicuity ; but he has considered these qualities as the primary requisites of translation, and both the sense and manner of his originals are sacrificed, without scruple, to their attainment \*.

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\* The following apology made by D'Ablancourt of his own version of Tacitus, contains, however, many just observations ; from which, with a proper abatement of that extreme liberty for which he contends, every translator may derive much advantage.

Of Tacitus he thus remarks : " Comme il considere souvent les choses par quelque biais étranger, il laisse quelquefois ses narrations imparfaites, ce qui engendre de l'obscurité dans ses ouvrages, outre la multitude des fautes qui s'y rencontrent, et le peu de lumiere qui nous reste de la plupart des choses qui y sont traitées. Il ne faut donc pas s'étonner s'il est si difficile à traduire, puisqu'il est même difficile à entendre. D'ailleurs il a accoutumé de méler dans une même période, et quelquefois dans une même expression diverses pensées qui ne tiennent point l'une à l'autre, et dont il faut perdre une partie, comme dans les ouvrages qu'on polit, pour pouvoir exprimer le reste sans choquer les délicatesses de notre langue, et la justesse du raisonnement. Car on n'a pas le même respect pour mon François que pour son Latin ; et l'on ne me pardonneroit pas des choses, qu'on admire souvent chez lui, et s'il faut ainsi dire, qu'en revere. Par tout ailleurs je l'ai suivi pas à pas, et plutôt en esclave qu'en compagnon ; quoique peutetre je ne pusse donner plus de liberté, puisque je ne traduis pas un passage, mais un livre, de qui toutes les parties doivent être unies ensemble, et comme fondues en un même corps. D'ailleurs, la diversité qui se trouve dans les langues est si grande, tant pour la construction et la forme des périodes, que pour les figures et les autres ornemens, qu'il faut à tous coups changer d'air et de visage, si l'on ne veut faire un corps monstrueux, tel que celui des traductions ordinaires, qui sont ou mortes et languissantes, ou confuses et embrouillées, sans aucun ordre ni agrément. Il faut donc prendre garde qu'on ne fasse perdre la grace à son auteur par trop de scrupule, et que de peur de lui manquer de foi en quelque chose, on ne lui soit infidele en tout : principalement quand on fait un ouvrage qui doit tenir lieu de l'original, et qu'on ne travaille pas pour faire entendre aux jeunes gens le Grec ou le Latin. Car on sait que les ex-

“ pressions hardies ne sont point exactes, parceque la justesse  
“ est ennemie de la grandeur, comme il se voit dans la pein-  
“ ture et dans l'écriture ; mais la hardiesse du trait en supplée le  
“ défaut, et elles sont trouvées plus belles de la sorte, que si  
“ elles étoient plus régulieres. D'ailleurs il est difficile d'etre  
“ bien exact dans la traduction d'un auteur qui ne l'est point.  
“ Souvent on est contraint d'ajouter quelque chose à sa pen-  
“ sée pour l'eclaircir ; quelquefois il faut en retrancher une  
“ partie, pour donner jour à tout le reste. Cependant, cela  
“ fait que les meilleures traductions paroissent les moins fide-  
“ les ; et un critique de notre tems a remarqué deux mille  
“ fautes dans le Plutarque d'Amyot, et un autre presqu'autant  
“ dans les traductions d'Erasme ; peutetre pour ne pas sa-  
“ voir que la diversité des langues et des styles oblige à des  
“ traits tout differens, parceque *l'Eloquence est une chose si*  
“ *delicate, qu'il ne faut quelquefois qu'une syllabe pour la cor-*  
“ *rompre*. Car du reste, il n'y a point d'apparence que deux  
“ si grands hommes se soient abusés en tant de lieux, quoi-  
“ qu'il ne soit pas étrange qu'on se puisse abuser en quelque  
“ endroit. Mais tout le monde n'est pas capable de juger  
“ d'une traduction, quoique tout le monde s'en attribue la  
“ connoissance ; et ici comme ailleurs, la maxime d'Aristote  
“ devroit servir de règle, qu'il faut croire chacun en son  
“ art.”



## CHAPTER X.

*It is less difficult to attain the Ease of Original Composition in Poetical, than in Prose Translation.—Lyric Poetry admits of the greatest Liberty of Translation.—Examples distinguishing Paraphrase from Translation,—from Dryden, Lowth, Fontenelle, Prior, Anguillara, Hughes.*

**I**t may perhaps appear paradoxical to assert, that it is less difficult to give to a poetical translation all the ease of original composition, than to give the same degree of ease to a prose translation. Yet the truth of this assertion will be readily admitted, if assent is given to that observation, which I before endeavoured to illustrate, viz. That

a superior degree of liberty is allowed to a poetical translator in amplifying, retrenching from, and embellishing his original, than to a prose translator. For without some portion of this liberty, there can be no ease of composition; and where the greatest liberty is allowable, there that ease will be most apparent, as it is less difficult to attain to it \*.

For the same reason, among the different species of poetical composition, the lyric is

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\* "It is almost impossible," says Dryden, in reference to his own poetical translations, "to translate verbally, and at the same time to translate well. The verbal copier is encumbered with so many difficulties at once, that he can never disentangle himself from all. He is to consider, at the same time, the thought of the author, and his words, and to find out the counterpart to each in another language; and besides this, he is to confine himself to the compass of numbers and the slavery of rhyme. It is like dancing on ropes with fettered legs: A man can shun a fall by using caution, but the gracefulness of motion is not to be expected: and when we have said the best of it, it is but a foolish task: for no sober man would put himself into a danger, for the applause of escaping without breaking his neck."

that which allows of the greatest liberty in translation; as a freedom both of thought and expression is agreeable to its character. Yet even in this, which is the freest of all species of translation, we must guard against licentiousness; and perhaps the more so, that we are apt to persuade ourselves that the less caution is necessary. The difficulty indeed is, where so much freedom is allowed, to define what is to be accounted licentiousness in poetical translation. A moderate liberty of amplifying and retrenching the ideas of the original, has been granted to the translator of prose; but is it allowable, even to the translator of a lyric poem, to add new images and new thoughts to those of the original, or to enforce the sentiments by illustrations which are not in the original? As the limits between free translation and paraphrases are more easily perceived than they can be well defined, instead of giving a general answer to this question, I think it safer to give my opinion upon particular examples.

DR Lowth has adapted to the present times, and addressed to his own countrymen, a very noble imitation of the 6th ode of the 3d book of Horace: *Delicta majorum immeritus lues*, &c. The greatest part of this composition is of the nature of parody; but in the version of the following stanza there is perhaps but a slight excess of that liberty which may be allowed to the translator of a lyric poet:

*Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos  
Matura virgo, et fingitur artibus  
Jam nunc, et incestos amores  
De tenero meditatur unguis.*

The ripening maid is vers'd in every dangerous art,  
That ill adorns the form, while it corrupts the heart;  
Practis'd to dress, to dance, to play,  
In wanton mask to lead the way,  
To move the pliant limbs, to roll the luring eye;  
With Folly's gayest partizans to vie  
In empty noise and vain expence;  
To celebrate with flaunting air  
The midnight revels of the fair;  
Studious of every praise, but virtue, truth, and sense.

HERE the translator has indeed superadded no new images or illustrations ; but he has, in two parts of the stanza, given a moral application which is not in the original : “ That ill adorns the form, while it corrupts the heart ;” and “ Studious of every praise, but virtue, truth, and sense.” These moral lines are unquestionably a very high improvement of the original ; but they seem to me to exceed the liberty allowed in a professed translation of a poem.

IN that fine translation by Dryden, of the 29th ode of the 3d book of Horace, which upon the whole is paraphrastical, the version of the two following stanzas has no more licence than what is justifiable :

*Fortuna aervo laeta negotio, et  
Ludem insolentem ludere pertinax,  
Transmutat incertos honores,  
Nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.*

*Laudo manentem : si celeres quatit  
Pennas, resingo quae dedit : et mea  
Virtute me involvo, probamque  
Pauperiem sine dote quero.*

by a most judicious and happy amplification of the sentiments, (which lose much of their effect in the Latin, from their extreme compression); nor do they, in my opinion, exceed the liberty of poetical translation.

Poor little pretty flutt'ring thing,  
Must we no longer live together?  
And do'st thou prune thy trembling wing,  
To take thy flight, thou know'st not whither?

The hum'rous vein, the pleasing folly,  
Lies all neglected, all forgot;  
And pensive, wav'ring melancholy,  
Thou dread'st and hop'st thou know'st not what.

MR Pope's “Dying Christian to his “soul,” which is modelled on the verses of Adrian, retains so little of the thoughts of the original, and substitutes in their place a train of sentiments so different, that it cannot even be called a *paraphrase*, but falls rather under the description of *imitation*.

THE Italian version of Ovid in *ottava rima*, by Anguillara, is a work of great poetical merit; but is scarcely in any part to be regarded as a translation of the original. It

is almost entirely paraphrastical. The Italian poet is often extremely happy in his amplifications; of which I shall give two remarkable examples. When Polyphemus discovers Galatea in company with his rival Acis, he utters a hideous cry :

Tantaque vox quantum Cyclops iratus habere  
Debuit, illa fuit : clamore perhorruit *Ætna*.

*Met. lib. 13.*

Tremò per troppo horrore Etna : e Tifeo  
Fece maggior la fiamma uscir del monte ;  
E Pachino, e Peloro, e Lilibeo,  
Quasi attuffar nel mar l'altera fronte :  
Cadde il martel di man nel monte Etneo  
Al re di Lenno, à Sterope e à Bronte ;  
Fuggir fiere, e augei del lor ricetto ;  
E si strinse ogni madre il figlio al petto.

EVERY thing in this passage, except the first line, is additional imagery with which Anguillara has embellished his original; but he must be a tasteless reader who is insensible to the high merit of those additions. The exquisitely tender image in the last line, contrasted with the pictures of horror in

those immediately preceding, affords a fine example of the union of the sublime and beautiful.

In the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, the simple ideas announced in these two lines,

Tempore eravit amor: tandem quoque jure collaserunt;  
Sed vetuere patres quod non potuisse vetare,

are the subject of the following paraphrase, which is as beautiful in its composition, as it is unbounded in the licence of its amplification :

Era l'amor cresciuto à poco à poco  
Secondo erano in lor cresciuti gli anni:  
E dove prima era trastullo, e gioco,  
Scherzi, corrucci, e fanciulleschi inganni,  
Quando fur giunti a quella età di foco  
Dove comincian gli amoretti affanni  
Che l'alma nostra ha sì leggiadro il manto  
E che la Donna e'l huom s'amano tanto;

Era tanto l'amer, tanto il desire,  
Tanta la fiamma, onde ciascun ardea:  
Che l' uno e l' altro si vedea morire,  
Se pietoso Himeneo non gli giungea.

E tanto era maggior d'arabi il martire,  
 Quanto il voler de l'un l'altro scorge.  
 Ben ambo de le nosse eran contenti,  
 Ma no'l soffrirò i loro espi parenti.

Eram fra i padri lor pochi anni avanti  
 Nata una troppo cruda inimicizia :  
 E quanto amore, e fè s'habber gli amanti,  
 Tanto regnò ne' padri odiò e malitia.  
 Gli huomini della terra piu prestanti,  
 Tentar pur di ridurli in amicitia ;  
 E vi s'affaticar piu volte asse ;  
 Ma non vi sepper via ritrovar mai.

Quei padri, che fra lor fur si infedeli  
 Vetaro à la fanciulla, e al giovinetto,  
 A due si belli amanti, e si fedeli  
 Che non dier luogo al desiato affetto :  
 Ahi padri irragionevoli e crudeli \*,  
 Perche togliete lor tanto diletto ;  
 S'ogn'un di loro il suo desio corregge  
 Con la terrena, e la celeste lagge ?

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\* A striking resemblance to this beautiful apostrophe "Ahi  
 " padri irragionevoli," is found in the beginning of *Moncrif's*  
*Romance d'Alexis et Alis*, a ballad which the French justly  
 consider as a model of tenderness and elegant simplicity :

O sfortunati padri, ove tendete,  
 Qual ve gli fa destin tener disgiunti ?  
 Perche vetate, quel che non potete ?  
 Che gli animi saran sempre congiunti ?  
 Ahi, che sara di voi, se gli vedrete  
 Per lo vostro rigor restar defunti ?  
 Ahi, che co' vostri non sani consigli  
 Procurate la morte a' vostri figli !

Pourquoi rompre leur mariage,  
 Méchans parens ?  
 Ils auroient fait si bon menage  
 A tous momens !  
 Que sert d'avoir bagues et dentelle  
 Pour se parer ?  
 Ah ! la richesse la plus belle  
 Est de s'aimer.

Quand on a commencé la vie  
 Disant ainsi :  
 Oui, vous serez toujours ma mie,  
 Vous mon ami :  
 Quand l'age augmente encor l'envie  
 De s'entreunir,  
 Qu'avec un autre on nous marie  
 Vaut mieux mourir.

IN the following poem by Mr Hughes, which the author has entitled an imitation of the 16th ode of the 2d book of Horace, the greatest part of the composition is a just and excellent translation, while the rest is a free paraphrase or commentary on the original. I shall mark in Italics, all that I consider as paraphrastical: the rest is a just translation, in which the writer has assumed no more liberty, than was necessary to give the poem the easy air of an original composition.

## I.

Indulgent Quiet! Pow'r serene,  
Mother of Peace, and Joy, and Love,  
O say, thou calm, propitious Queen,  
Say, in what solitary grove,  
Within what hollow rock, or winding cell,  
By human eyes unseen,  
Like some retreated Druid dost thou dwell?  
And why, illusive Goddess! why,  
When we thy mansion would surround,  
Why dost thou lead us through enchanted ground,  
To mock our vain research, and from our wishes fly?

## II.

The wand'ring sailors, pale with fear,  
 For thee the Gods implore,  
 When the tempestuous sea runs high,  
 And when through all the dark, benighted sky,  
 No friendly moon or stars appear,  
 To guide their steerage to the shore :  
 For thee the weary soldier prays,  
 Furious in fight the sons of Thrace,  
 And Medes, that wear majestic by their side.  
 A full-charg'd quiv'rl's decent pride,  
 Gladly with thee would pass inglorious days,  
 Renounce the warrior's tempting praise,  
 And buy thee, if thou might'st be sold,  
 With gems, and purple vests, and stores of plun'rd'g gold.

## III.

But neither boundless wealth, nor guards that wait  
 Around the Consul's honour'd gate.  
 Nor antichambers with attendants fill'd,  
 The mind's unhappy tumults can abate,  
 Or banish sullen cares, that fly  
 Across the gilded rooms of state,  
 And their foul nests like swallows build  
 Close to the palace-roofs and tow'rs that pierce the sky ?  
 Much less will Nature's modest wants supply :

And happier lives the honest swain,  
 Who in some cottage, far from noise,  
 His few paternal goods enjoys ;  
 Nor knows the cordial lust of gain,  
 Nor with Fear's tormenting pain  
 His hovering sleep destroys.

## IV.

Vain man ! that in a narrow space  
 At endless game projects the darting spear !  
 For short is life's uncertain race ;  
 Then why, capricious mortal ! why  
 Dost thou for happiness repair  
 To distant climates and a foreign air ?  
 Fool ! from thyself thou canst not fly,  
 Thyself the source of all thy care :  
*So flies the wounded stag, provok'd with pain,*  
*Bounds o'er the spacious downs in vain ;*  
*The feather'd torment sticks within his side,*  
*And from the smarting wound a purple tide*  
*Marks all his way with blood, and dyes the grassy plain.*

## V.

But swifter far is execrable Care  
 Than stags, or winds, that through the skies  
 Thick-driving snows and gather'd tempests bear ;  
 Pursuing Care the sailing ship out-flies.

Climbs the tall vessel's painted sides ;  
Nor leaves arm'd squadrons in the field,  
But with the marching horsemen rides,  
And dwells alike in courts and camps, and makes all places  
yield.

## VI.

Then, since no state's completely blest,  
Let's learn the bitter to allay  
With gentle mirth, and, wisely gay,  
Enjoy at least the present day,  
And leave to Fate the rest.  
Nor with vain fear of ills to come  
Anticipate th' appointed doom.  
Soon did Achilles quit the stage ;  
The hero fell by sudden death ;  
While Tithon to a tedious, wasting age  
Drew his protracted breath.  
And thus, old partial Time, my friend,  
Perhaps unask'd, to worthless me  
Those hours of lengthen'd life may lend,  
Which he'll refuse to thee.

## VII.

Thee shining wealth, and plenteous joys surround,  
And all thy fruitful fields around  
Unnumber'd herds of cattle stray ;

Thy harness'd steeds with sprightly voice,  
 Make neighbouring vales and hills rejoice,  
 While smoothly thy gay chariot flies o'er the swift-meas-  
 sur'd way.

To me the stars with less profusion kind,  
 An humble fortune have assign'd,  
 And no untuneful Lyric vein,  
 But a sincere contented mind  
 That can the vile, malignant crowd disdain \*.

\* *Otium divos rogat in patenti  
 Prensus Ægeo, simul atra nubes  
 Condidit Lunam, neque certa fulgent  
 Sidera nautis.*

*Otium bello furiosa Thrace,  
 Otium Medi pharetrâ decori,  
 Grophe, non gemmis, neque purpurâ venale, nec  
 auro.*

*Non enim gaza, neque Consularis  
 Summovet lictor miseros tumultus  
 Mentis, et curas laqueata circum  
 Tecta volantes.*

*Vivitur parvo bene, cui paternum  
 Splendet in mensâ tenui salinum ;  
 Nec leves somnos Timor aut Cupido  
 Sordidus aufert.*

ON the subject of poetical translation, no writer has thrown together more sound sense, and just observation, in a small compass, than Mr Dryden: and with his remarks, which go near to exhaust the subject, I shall conclude this chapter:

Quid brevi fortes jaculamur avo  
 Multa? quid terras alio calentes  
 Sole mutamus? Patrie quis exul,  
 Se quoque fugit?

Scandit seratas vitiosa naves  
 Cura, nec turmas equitum relinquit,  
 Ocyor cervis, et agente nimbos  
 Ocyor Euro.

Lætus in præsens animus, quod ultra est  
 Oderit curare; et amara lento  
 Temperat risu. Nihil est ab omni  
 Parte beatum.

Abstulit clarum cita mors Achillem:  
 Longa Tithonum minuit senectus:  
 Et mihi forsitan, tibi quod negarit,  
 Porriget hora.

" No man is capable of translating poetry, who, besides a genius to that art, is not a master, both of his author's language and of his own: nor must we understand the language only of the poet, but his particular turn of thoughts and expression, which are the characters that distinguish, and as it were, individualize him from all other writers. When we are come thus far, it is time to look into ourselves, to conform our genius to his, to give his thoughts either the same turn, if our tongue will bear it, or if not, to vary but the dress, not to alter or destroy the substance. The like care must be taken of the more outward ornaments, the

Te greges centum, Siculæque circum  
 Mugunt vaccæ; tibi tollit hinnitum  
 Aptæ quadrigis equa: te bis Afro  
 Murice tinctæ.

Vestiunt lance: mihi parva rura, et  
 Spiritum Graize tenuem Cameræ  
 Parca non mendax dedit, et malignum  
 Spernere vulgas.

Hor. Od. 2. 16.

“ words. When they appear, which is but sel-  
“ dom, literally graceful, it were an injury  
“ to the author, that they should be chan-  
“ ged: but since every language is so full  
“ of its own proprieties, that what is beauti-  
“ ful in one is often barbarous, nay some-  
“ times nonsense in another, it would be  
“ unreasonable to limit a translator to the  
“ narrow compass of his author's words. It  
“ is enough if he choose out some expres-  
“ sion which does not vitiate the sense. I  
“ suppose he may stretch his chain to such  
“ a latitude; but by innovation of thoughts,  
“ methinks, he breaks it. By this means,  
“ the spirit of an author may be transfused,  
“ and yet not lost: and thus, it is plain,  
“ that the reason alleged by Sir John Den-  
“ ham has no farther force than to expres-  
“ sion: for thought, if it be translated truly,  
“ cannot be lost in another language; but  
“ the words that convey it to our apprehen-  
“ sion, (which are the image and ornament  
“ of that thought), may be so ill chosen, as  
“ to make it appear in an unhandsome  
“ dress, and rob it of its native lustre.  
“ There is, therefore, a liberty to be allow-

“ ed for the expression : Neither is it necessary that words and lines should be confined to the measure of their original. The sense of an author, generally speaking, is to be sacred and inviolable. If the fancy of Ovid be luxuriant, it is his character to be so ; and if I retrench it, he is no longer Ovid. It will be replied, that he receives advantage by this lopping off his superfluous branches ; but I rejoin, that a translator has no such right. When a painter copies from the life, I suppose he has no privilege to alter features and lineaments, under pretence that his picture will look better ; perhaps the face which he has drawn would be more exact, if the eyes or nose were altered ; but it is his business to make it resemble the original. In two cases only there may a seeming difficulty arise ; that is, if the thought be either notoriously trivial or dishonest but the answer will serve for both, That then they ought not to be translated.

“ —————— Et quæ  
“ Desperes tractata nitescere posses relinquas.”

DAYDEN’s Pref. to Trans. from OVID’s Epistles.



## CHAPTER XI.

*Of the Translation of Idioms. — General Idioms. — Idiomatic Phrases. — Examples from Spelman, Smollet's Gil Blas, Cotton, Echard, Sterne. — Injudicious Use of Idioms in the Translation, which do not correspond with the Age or Country of the Original. — Idiomatic Phrases sometimes incapable of Translation.*

WHILE a translator endeavours to give to his work all the ease of original composition, the chief difficulty he has to encounter will be found in the translation of idioms, or those turns of expression which do not belong to universal grammar, but of which every language has its own,

that are exclusively proper to it. It will be easily understood, that when I speak of the difficulty of translating idioms, I do not mean those peculiar phrases in all languages of which the sense is not accurately conveyed by the literal meaning: As, for example, the French phrase, *un homme bien né*, which we see often translated, *a man well born, or of a good family*; instead of *a man of good natural dispositions*: for a mistake in phrases of this kind only shews the translator's insufficient knowledge of the language from which he translates. Neither do I mean those general modes of arrangement or construction which regulate a whole language, and which may not be common to it with other tongues: As, for example, the placing the adjective always before the substantive in English, which in French and in Latin is more commonly placed after it; the use of the participle in English, where the present tense is used in other languages; as he is writing, *scribit, il écrit*; the use of the preposition *to* before the infinitive in English, where the French use the preposition *de* or *of*. These last, which

may be termed the *general idioms* of a language, are soon understood, and are exchanged for parallel idioms with the utmost ease. With regard to these a translator can never err, unless through affectation or choice. For example, in translating the French phrase, *Il profita d'un avis*, he may choose fashionably to say, in violation of the English construction, *he profited of an advice*; or, under the sanction of poetical licence, he may choose to engraft the idiom of one language into another, as Mr Macpherson has done, where he says, “Him “to the strength of Hercules, the lovely “Astyochea bore;” Όν, τεκεν Ἀστυοχεα, βαγ  
Ηερκαλητη. Il. lib. 2. l. 165.

I must here, however, notice two errors in regard to general idioms into which many translators from the French language into the English, have fallen, either from ignorance, or inattention to the general construction of the two languages. 1. In narrative, or the description of past actions, the French often use the present tense for the preterite: *Deux jeunes nobles Mexicains*

*jettent leurs armes, et viennent à lui comme déserteurs. Ils mettent un genouil à terre dans la posture des supplians ; ils le saisissent, et s'élancent de la plateforme.—Cortez s'en débarasse, et se retient à la balustrade. Les deux jeunes nobles perissent sans avoir executé leur généreuse entreprise.* Raynal Hist. Phil. et Pol. liv. vi. Let us observe the awkward effect of a similar use of the present tense in English. “ Two young Mexicans of noble birth throw away their arms, and come to him as deserters. They kneel in the posture of suppliants ; they seize him, and throw themselves from the platform. — Cortez disengages himself from their grasp, and keeps hold of the ballustrade. The noble Mexicans perish without accomplishing their generous design.” In like manner, the use of the present for the past tense is very common in Greek, and we frequently remark the same impropriety in English translations from that language. “ After the death of Darius, and the accession of Artaxerxes, Tissaphernes accuses Cyrus to his brother of treason : Artaxerxes gives credit to

“ the accusation, and orders Cyrus to be  
“ apprehended, with a design to put him  
“ to death; but his mother having saved  
“ him by her intercession, sends him back  
“ to his government.” Spelman’s *Xenophon*.  
In the original, these verbs are put in the  
present tense, διαβαλλει, τιθεται, συλλαμβανει,  
αποτιθεται. But this use of the present tense  
in narrative is contrary to the genius of the  
English language. The poets have assumed  
it: and in them it is allowable, be-  
cause it is their object to paint scenes at  
present to the eye; *ut pictura poesis*; but  
all that a prose narrative can pretend to,  
is an animated description of things past:  
if it goes any farther, it encroaches on the  
department of poetry \*.

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\* In one way, however, this use of the present tense is found in the best English historians, namely, in the sum-  
mary heads, or content of chapters. “ Lambert Simnel in-  
vades England,—Perkin Warbeck is avowed by the Duchess  
of Burgundy—he returns to Scotland—he is taken pris-  
oner—and executed,” *Hume*. But it is by an ellipsis  
that the present tense comes to be thus used. The sentence  
at large would stand thus: “ *This chapter relates how Lam-*  
“ *bert Simnel invades England, how Perkin Warbeck is*  
“ *avowed by the Duchess of Burgundy,* &c.

2. THE following error relative to a general idiom, is one of which we may find examples, even in translations of great merit. The French, in familiar conversation, with an equal or inferior, use the personal pronoun *tu* and *te* or *toi*, in the singular number instead of the plural *vous*; (*Ils se tutoyent*). This usage is always indicative of ease and familiarity, and often of endearment. But it is idiomatic, or peculiar to the French language; the English does not admit that mode of speech in familiar discourse. None but a Quaker uses *thee* and *thou*, with the corresponding employment of the verb in the singular number. Such use, therefore, in the English, produces a quite contrary effect to that which it produces in the French; and instead of ease, familiarity or endearment, is necessarily attended with stiffness, formality and precision. The translation of *Gil Blas* by Smollett, is a work of great merit. The English author is true to the sense, manner, and spirit of his original, and is often extremely happy in the interchange of particular idioms. But he has

uniformly erred with regard to that general idiomatic use of the pronoun *tu*, *te*, and *toi*; and has thus thrown an air of stillness and formality on those parts, which in the original are most distinguished for their ease and spirit. A single example will illustrate these remarks: “*Fabrice ne pût même s’em-  
pêcher de me dire un jour : En vérité, Gil  
Blas, je ne te reconnois plus. Avant que  
tu fusses à la cour, tu avois toujours l’esprit  
tranquille : à présent je te vois sans cesse  
agité. Tu formes projet sur projet pour  
t’enricher, et plus tu amasses de bien, plus  
tu veux en amasser. Outre cela, te le di-  
rai-je ? Tu n’as plus avec moi ces épanche-  
mens de cœur, ces manières libres qui font  
le charme des liaisons.*” Tout au contraire; “*tu t’enveloppes, et me caches le fonds de  
ton ame. Je remarque même de la contrainte  
dans les honnêtetés que tu me fais. En-  
fin Gil Blas n’est plus ce même Gil Blas  
que j’ai connu. Tu plaisantes sans doute,  
lui répondis-je, d’un air assez froid. Je  
n’apperçois en moi aucun changement.—Ce  
n’est point à tes yeux, repliqua-t-il, qu’on  
doit s’en rapporter. Ils sont fascinés.*”

“ *Crois-moi, ta métamorphose n'est que trop véritable.*” Fabricio one day could not help saying, “ Truly, Gil Blas, thou art “ grown out of my knowledge: before thy “ coming to Court, thou wast always easy “ and tranquil: at present thou art incess- “ antly agitated with project after project “ to enrich thyself; and the more wealth “ thou hast got, the more wouldest thou “ amass. Besides, let me tell thee, thou no “ longer treatest me with that effusion of “ the heart, and freedom of behaviour which “ are the soul of friendship: on the contra- “ ry, thou wrappest thyself up, and con- “ cealest from me thy secret views: nay, I “ can perceive constraint in all thy civilities “ towards me. In short, Gil Blas is no long- “ er the same Gil Blas whom I formerly “ knew. You joke, sure, (said I, with an “ air of indifference), I can't perceive any “ change in myself.—Thy own eyes are no “ judges, (answered he), they are bewitch- “ ed: believe me, the metamorphosis is “ but too true.”—The contrasted effect of “ the ease of the original with the stiffness of “ the translation, must be apparent to every

reader. In one place the translator was compelled into the right path. *Tu plaisantes, sans doute, lui répondis-je* : “ You joke, sure, “ said I.” — “ *Thou jokest, sure, said I*,” could not have been tolerated in easy conversation : a proof that ought to have led the ingenuous translator to suspect that he had been violating the English idiom through the whole passage.

But it is not with regard to such general idioms as I have mentioned above, that an able translator will often be led into error. It is in the translation of those particular idiomatic phrases of which every language has its own collection ; phrases which are generally of a familiar nature, and which occur most commonly in conversation, or in that species of writing which approaches to the ease of conversation.

The translation is perfect, when the translator finds in his own language an idiomatic phrase corresponding to that of the original. Montaigne (Ess. l. 1. c. 29.) says of Gallio, “ *Lequel ayant été envoyé en exil en l'île*

“ de Lesbos, on fut averti à Rome, *qu'il s'y donnoit du bon temps*, et que ce qu'on lui avoit enjoint pour peine, lui tournoit à commodité.” The difficulty of translating this sentence lies in the idiomatic phrase, “ *qu'il s'y donnoit du bon temps*.” Cotton finding a parallel idiom in English, has translated the passage with becoming ease and spirit: “ As it happened to one Gallio, who having been sent an exile to the isle of Lesbos, news was not long after brought to Rome, that *he there lived as merry as the day was long*; and that what had been enjoined him for a penance, turned out to his greatest pleasure and satisfaction.” Thus, in another passage of the same author, (Essais, l. 1. c. 29.) “ *Si j'eusse été chef de part, j'eusse prins autre voye plus naturelle.*”—“ *Had I rul'd the roast, I should have taken another and more natural course.*” So likewise, (Ess. l. 1. c. 25.) “ *Mais d'y enfoncer plus avant, et de m' être rongé les ongles à l'étude d'Aristote, monarque de la doctrine moderne.*”—“ *But, to dive farther than that, and to have cudgell'd my brains*

“ *in the study of Aristotle*, the monarch of  
“ all modern learning.” So, in the fol-  
lowing passages from Terence, translated  
by Echard: “ *Credo manibus pedibusque*  
“ *obnixè omnia facturum*,” Andr. Act. 1.  
“ I know he’ll be at it tooth and nail.”  
“ *Herus, quantum audio, uxore excidit*,”  
Andr. Act. 2. “ For aught I perceive, my  
“ poor master may go whistle for a wife.”

IN like manner, the following collo-  
quial phrases are capable of a perfect  
translation by corresponding idioms. *Rem*  
*acu tetigisti*, “ You have hit the nail  
“ upon the head.” *Mihi isthic nec seritur,*  
*nec metitur*, Plaut. “ That’s no bread and  
“ butter of mine.” *Omnem jecit aleam*,  
“ It was neck or nothing with him.” *Ti προς*  
*π' αλφίτα*; Aristoph. Nub. “ Will that make  
“ the pot boil ?”

IT is not perhaps possible to produce a  
happier instance of translation by corre-  
sponding idioms, than Sterne has given in  
the translation of Slawkenbergius’s Tale.  
*Nihil me paenitet hujus nasi*, “ Quoth Pam-

“ phagus ; that is, my nose has been the man-  
“ king of me.” *Nec est cur paeniteat* ; “ that  
“ is, How the deuce should such a nose  
“ fail ?” *Tristram Shandy*, vol. iii. chap. 7.  
*Miles peregrini in faciem susperit. Di boni,  
nova forma nasi !* “ The sentinel looked up  
“ into the stranger’s face.—Never saw such  
“ a nose in his life !” *Ibid.*

As there is nothing which so much con-  
duces both to the ease and spirit of compo-  
sition, as a happy use of idiomatic phrases,  
there is nothing which a translator, who has  
a moderate command of his own language,  
is so apt to carry to a licentious extreme.  
Echard, whose translations of Terence and  
of Plautus, have, upon the whole, much mer-  
it, is extremely censurable for his intem-  
perate use of idiomatic phrases. In the first  
act of the *Andria*, Davus thus speaks to  
himself :

*Enimvero, Dave, nihil loci est segnitiae neque socordiae.*  
*Quantum intellexi senis sententiam de nuptiis :*  
*Quae si non astu providentur, me aut herum pessimabunt :*  
*Nec quid agam certum est, Pamphilumne adjutem an auscul-*  
*tem seni.*

Terent. *Andr.* Act. 1. sc. 3.

The translation of this passage by Echard, exhibits a strain of vulgar petulance, which is very opposite to the chastened simplicity of the original.

“ WHY, seriously, poor Davy, 'tis high  
“ time to bestir thy stumps, and to leave off  
“ dozing ; at least, if a body may guess at  
“ the old man's meaning by his mumping.  
“ If these brains do not help me out at a  
“ dead lift, to pot goes Pilgarlick, or his  
“ master, for certain : and hang me for a  
“ dog, if I know which side to take ; whe-  
“ ther to help my young master, or make  
“ fair with his father.”

IN the use of idiomatic phrases, a translator frequently forgets both the country of his original author, and the age in which he wrote ; and while he makes a Greek or a Roman speak French or English, he unwittingly puts into his mouth allusions to the manners of modern France or England\*.

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\* It is surprising, that this fault should meet even with approbation from so judicious a critic as Denham. In the pre-

This, to use a phrase borrowed from painting, may be termed an offence against the *costume*. The proverbial expression, *βαργαχων ιδωρ*, in Theocritus, is of similar import with the English proverb, *to carry coals to*

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face to his translation of the second book of the *Aeneid*, he says: " As speech is the apparel of our thoughts, so there are certain girths and modes of speaking which vary with the times; the fashion of our clothes being not more subject to alteration, than that of our speech: and this I think Tacitus means by that which he calls *Sermonem temporis istius aevi accommodatum*, the delight of change being as due to the curiosity of the ear as of the eye: and therefore, if Virgil must needs speak English, it were fit he should speak, not only *as a man of this nation, but as a man of this age.*" The translator's opinion is exemplified in his practice.

*Infandum, Regina, jubes renovare dolorem.*

" *Madam, when you command us to review  
Our fate, you make our old wounds bleed anew.*"

Of such translation it may with truth be said, in the words of Franklin,

Thus Greece and Rome, in modern dress array'd,  
Is but antiquity in masquerade,

*Newcastle*; but it would be a gross impropriety to use this expression in the translation of an ancient classic. Cicero, in his oration for Archias, says, “*Persona quæ prop-  
ter otium et studium minime in judiciis per-  
riculisque versata est.*” M. Patru has translated this, “*Un homme que ses études  
et ses livres ont éloigné du commerce du  
Palais.*” The *Palais*, or the Old Palace of the kings of France, it is true, is the place where the parliament of Paris and the chief courts of justice were assembled for the decision of causes; but it is just as absurd to make Cicero talk of his haranguing in the *Palais*, as it would be of his pleading in Westminster Hall. In this respect, Echard is most notoriously faulty: We find in every page of his translations of Terence and Plautus, the most incongruous jumble of ancient and of modern manners. He talks of the “Lord Chief-Justice of Athens,” *Jam tu autem nobis Præturam geris?* Plaut. Epid. act. 1. sc. 1. and says, “I will send him to Bridewell with his skin stripped over his ears,” *Hominem irrigatum plagiis pistori dabo*, Ibid. sc. 3. “I must

“ expect to beat hemp in Bridewell all the days of my life,” *Molendum mihi est usque in pistrina*, Ter. *Phormio*. act 2. “ He looks as grave as an alderman,” *Tristis severitas inest in vultu*, *Ibid. Andria*, act 5.—The same author makes the ancient heathen Romans and Greeks swear British and Christian oaths; such as, “ Fore George, Blood and ounds, Gadzookers, ‘ ‘ ‘ Sbuddikins, By the Lord Harry !” They are likewise well read in the books both of the Old and New Testament: “ Good b’ye, Sir Solomon,” says Gripus to Trachalion, *Salve, Thales !* *Pl. Rudens*, act 4. sc. 3. ; and Sosia thus vouches his own identity to Mercury, “ By Jove I am he, and ‘ ‘ ‘ tis as true as the gospel,” *Per Jovem juro, mea esse, neque me falsum dicere*, *Pl. Amphit* act 1. sc. 1 \*. The same ancients, in Mr Echard’s translation, are familiarly

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\* The modern air of the following sentence is, however, not displeasing: Antipho asks Cherea, where he has bespoke supper; he answers, *Apud libertum Discum*, “ At Discus the freedman’s.” Echard, with a happy familiarity, says, “ At old Harry Platter’s. *Ter. Eun. act. 3. sc. 5.*

acquainted with the modern invention of gunpowder; "Had we but a mortar now  
" to play upon them under the covert way,  
" one bomb would make them scamper,"  
*Fundam tibi nunc nimis vellem dari, ut tu*  
*illos procul hinc ex oculto cæderes, facerent*  
*fugam*, Ter. Eun. act 4. And as their sol-  
diers swear and fight, so they must needs  
drink like the moderns: "This god can't af-  
" ford one brandy-shop in all his domi-  
" nions," *Ne thermopolium quidem ullum*  
*ille instruit*, Pl. Rud. act 2. sc. 9. In the  
same comedy, Plautus, who wrote 180 years  
before Christ, alludes to the battle of La  
Hogue, fought A. D. 1692, "I'll be as  
" great as a king," says Grapus, "I'll have  
" a *Royal Sun*\* for pleasure, like the King  
" of France, and sail about from port to  
" port," *Navibus magnis mercaturam faciam*,  
Pl. Rud. act 4, sc. 2.

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\* Alluding to the French Admiral's ship *Le Soleil Royal*, beaten and disabled by Russell.

IN the Latin Poems of Pitcairne \*, we remark an uncommon felicity in clothing pictures of modern manners in classical phraseology. In familiar poetry, and in pieces of a witty or humorous nature, this has often a very happy effect, and exalts the ridicule of the sentiment, or humour of the picture. But Pitcairne's fondness for the language of Horace, Ovid, and Lucretius, has led him sometimes into a gross violation of propriety, and the laws of good taste. In the translation of a Psalm, we are shocked when we find the Almighty addressed by the epithets of a heathen divinity, and his attributes celebrated in the language and allusions proper to the Pagan mythology. Thus, in the translation of the 104th Psalm, every one must be sensible of the glaring impropriety of the following expressions :

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\* A poet from whom Dryden and Prior did not disdain to translate. See the epitaph on the Viscount of Dundee, translated by Dryden, and *Gualterus Danistonus ad amicos*, by Prior.

Dexteram invictam canimus, Jovemque  
Qui triumphatis, hominum et Deorum  
Præsidet regnis. ——  
Quam tuse virtus tremefecit orbem  
Juppiter dextræ. ——

Et manus ventis tua Dædaleas  
Assuit alas.

————— facilesque leges  
Rebus imponis, quibus antra parent  
Æoli. ——

Proluit siccam pluvialis æther  
Barbam, et arentes humeros Atlantis.

Quæ fovet tellus, fluidumque regnum  
Tethyos. ——

Juppiter carmen mihi semper. ——

Juppiter solus mihi rex. ——

In the entire translation of the Psalms by Johnston, we do not find a single instance of similar impropriety. And in the admirable version by Buchanan, there are (to my knowledge) only two passages which

are censurable on that account. The one is the beginning of the 4th Psalm :

Ó Pater, O hominum *Divinque* aeternæ potestas !

which is the first line of the speech of Venus to Jupiter, in the 10th *Aeneid* : and the other is the beginning of Psalm 82. where two entire lines, with the change of one syllable, are borrowed from Horace :

*Regum timendorum in proprios greges,*  
*Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovæ.*

In the latter example, the poet probably judged that the change of *Jovis* into *Jovæ* removed all objection ; and Ruddiman has attempted to vindicate the *Divinæ* of the former passage, by applying it to saints or angels : but allowing there were sufficient apology for both those words, the impropriety still remains : for the associated ideas present themselves immediately to the mind, and we are justly offended with the literal adoption of an address to Jupiter in a hymn to the Creator.

If a translator is bound, in general, to adhere with fidelity to the manners of the age and country to which his original belongs, there are some instances in which he will find it necessary to make a slight sacrifice to the manners of his modern readers. The ancients, in the expression of resentment or contempt, made use of many epithets and appellations which sound extremely shocking to our more polished ears, because we never hear them employed but by the meanest and most degraded of the populace. By similar reasoning we must conclude, that those expressions conveyed no such meaning or shocking ideas to the ancients, since we find them used by the most dignified and exalted characters. In the 19th book of the *Odyssey*, Melantho, one of Penelope's maids, having vented her spleen against Ulysses, and treated him as a bold beggar who had intruded himself into the palace as a spy, is thus sharply reproved by the Queen :

Πάντας, θαρσαλίη, χύνο ἀδδεῖς, ἔτι με λήθεις  
Ἐρδουσα μίγα ἕργοι, ὃ ση κιφαλῆ ἀταμάξεις.

THESE opprobrious epithets, in a literal translation would sound extremely offensive from the lips of the *πηγιφραν Πηγιλοτσια*, whom the poet has painted as a model of female dignity and propriety. Such translation, therefore, as conveying a picture different from what the poet intended, would be in reality injurious to his sense. Of this sort of refinement Mr Hobbes had no idea; and therefore he gives the epithets in their genuine purity and simplicity:

Bold bitch, said she, I know what deeds you've done,  
Which thou shalt one day pay for with thy head.

WE cannot fail, however, to perceive, that Mr Pope has in fact been more faithful to the sense of his original, by accommodating the expressions of the speaker to that character which a modern reader must conceive to belong to her:

Loquacious insolent, she cries, forbear!  
Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue.

PLINY, in one of his letters to Nepos,

(L. 2. ep. 3.) requests his friend to come and hear Isaeus declaim in the rhetorical school; and as an example of the superior effect of hearing an oration delivered, to that of reading it, or listening to its recital by another, he relates the celebrated saying of Æschines, on occasion of his repeating to the people of Rhodes, the animated oration of Demosthenes in the cause of the Crown: Τί δε, εἰ ἀντεῖ τοι θηρείς ἀκηκοεῖτε; This passage, it is evident, cannot be endured in a literal translation. It would carry the idea of a sarcasm or invective of Æschines against his rival, instead of the most generous avowal and splendid encomium of his powers of eloquence. Mr Melmoth accordingly does justice to the sentiment in thus translating the passage: "How would you " have been affected, had you heard the " orator himself thundering out this su- " blime harangue?" But in Lord Orrery's translation the sentiment is absolutely bur- lesqued, by an adherence to the literal interpretation: "What would you have said

“ had you heard that furious beast roar out  
“ his own words \*”.

A translator will often meet with idiomatic phrases in the original author, to

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\* “ Il faut prendre un milieu entre l'exactitude trop scrupuleuse qui les déguise (les poëtes) et la licence qui les altere. J'appelle déguiser un auteur, l'exposer dans une langue étrangère avec une fidélité, ou folle, ou maligne, ou superstitieuse. Toute langue a ses arrangemens d'idées, ses tours, et ses mots, nobles ou bas, énergiques ou foibles, vifs ou languissans. C'est un principe qu'on ne sauroit nier. Qui voudroit traduire les anciens mot pour mot en François, et suivant le tour Grec, les travestiroit sans doute, et les rendroit ridicules à peu de frais. Voila le premier degré de cette fausse fidélité dont je parle. Le second, et le plus malin, qu'on peut appeler Parodie, est de changer les expressions reçues dans le bel usage de l'antiquité, en termes bas et populaires, comme le faisoit M. Perrault. Le troisième degré, c'est de s'asservir scrupuleusement, à exprimer toutes les Epithetes, et à faire d'un beau mot Grec une méchante phrase Françoise, ou un allongement vicieux qui amortit le feu des poëtes, malgré tout le soin qu'ils ont eu d'animer leur poësie. On doit à l'équité de les faire parler François (autant qu'on le peut) comme ils parleroient eux-mêmes, s'ils faisoient passer leur pensées en notre langue. Pourquoi changer en monnoye de cuivre un dépôt que l'on peut conserver en or ?” *BRUMOY, Disc. (Préliminaire) sur le Théâtre des Grecs.*

which no corresponding idiom can be found in the language of the translation. As a literal translation of such phrases cannot be tolerated, the only resource is, to express the sense in plain and easy language. Cicero, in one of his letters to Papirius Pætus, says, “*Veni igitur, si vires, et disce “jam τροληγομενας quas quaris; etsi sus “Minervam,*” Ep. ad Fam. 9. 18. The idiomatic phrase *si vires*, is capable of a perfect translation by a corresponding idiom; but that which occurs in the latter part of the sentence, *etsi sus Minervam*, can neither be translated by a corresponding idiom, nor yet literally. Mr Melmoth has thus happily expressed the sense of the whole passage: “If you have any spirit then, fly “hither, and learn from our elegant bills “of fare how to refine your own; though, “to do your talents justice, this is a sort of “knowledge in which you are much super-“rior to your instructors.”—Pliny, in one of his epistles to Calvisius, thus addresses him, *Assem para, et accipe auream fabulam: fabulas immo: nam me priorum nova admonuit, lib 2. ep. 20.* To this expression, as

*sem para*, &c. which is a proverbial mode of speech, we have nothing that corresponds in English. To translate the phrase literally would have a poor effect: “ Give me a penny, and take a golden story, or a story worth gold.” Mr Melmoth has given the sense in easy language: “ Are you inclined to hear a story? or, if you please, two or three? for one brings to my mind another.”

BUT this resource, of translating the idiomatic phrase into easy language, must fail, where the merit of the passage to be translated actually lies in that expression which is idiomatical. This will often occur in epigrams, many of which are therefore incapable of translation: The following epigram of Martial affords a complete example:

Semper agis causas, et res agis, Attale, semper;  
 Est, non est quod agas, Attale, semper agis:  
 Si res et cause desunt, agis, Attale, mulas;  
 Attale, ne quod agas desit, agas animam.

Thus, too, in the following epigram, the point

of wit lies in an idiomatic phrase, and is lost in every other language where the same precise idiom does not occur :

*On the wretched imitations of the Diable Boiteux of  
LE SAGE :*

Le Diable Boiteux est aimable ;  
Le Sage y triomphe aujourd’hui ;  
Tout ce qu'on a fait après lui  
N'a pas valu le Diable.

We say in English, “ ‘Tis not worth a fig,” or, “ ‘tis not worth a farthing ;” but we cannot say, as the French do, “ ‘Tis not worth “ the devil ;” and therefore the epigram cannot be translated into English,

It is evident, that it is equally impossible to translate those epigrams where the point lies in a pun or play of words in the original language : as, for example,

‘Avés, non ἔτικες mihi sit, mihi qui sit ἔτικες :  
Sit comis, quisquis vult meus esse comes.

*Oweni Epigrammata.*

Or another of the same author :

Quid facies, facies Veneris cùm veneris ante ?  
Ne sedeas, sed eas, ne pereas per eas.

EQUALLY incapable of justice in any translation are the following lines of Marot, in his *Epître au Roi*, where the merit lies in the ludicrous *naiveté* of the last line, which is idiomatical, and has no strictly corresponding expression in English :

J'avois un jour un valet de Gascogne,  
Gourmand, yvrogne, et assuré menteur,  
Pipeur, larron, jureur, blasphémateur,  
Sentant la hart de cent pas à la ronde :  
Au demeurant *le meilleur fils du monde*.

ALTHOUGH we have idioms in English that are nearly similar to this, we have none which has the same *naiveté*, and therefore no justice can be done to this passage by any English translation.

THE following happy imitation of the style and manner of Marot, would, on account of its singular *naiveté* of expression, prove a most arduous task to any translator :

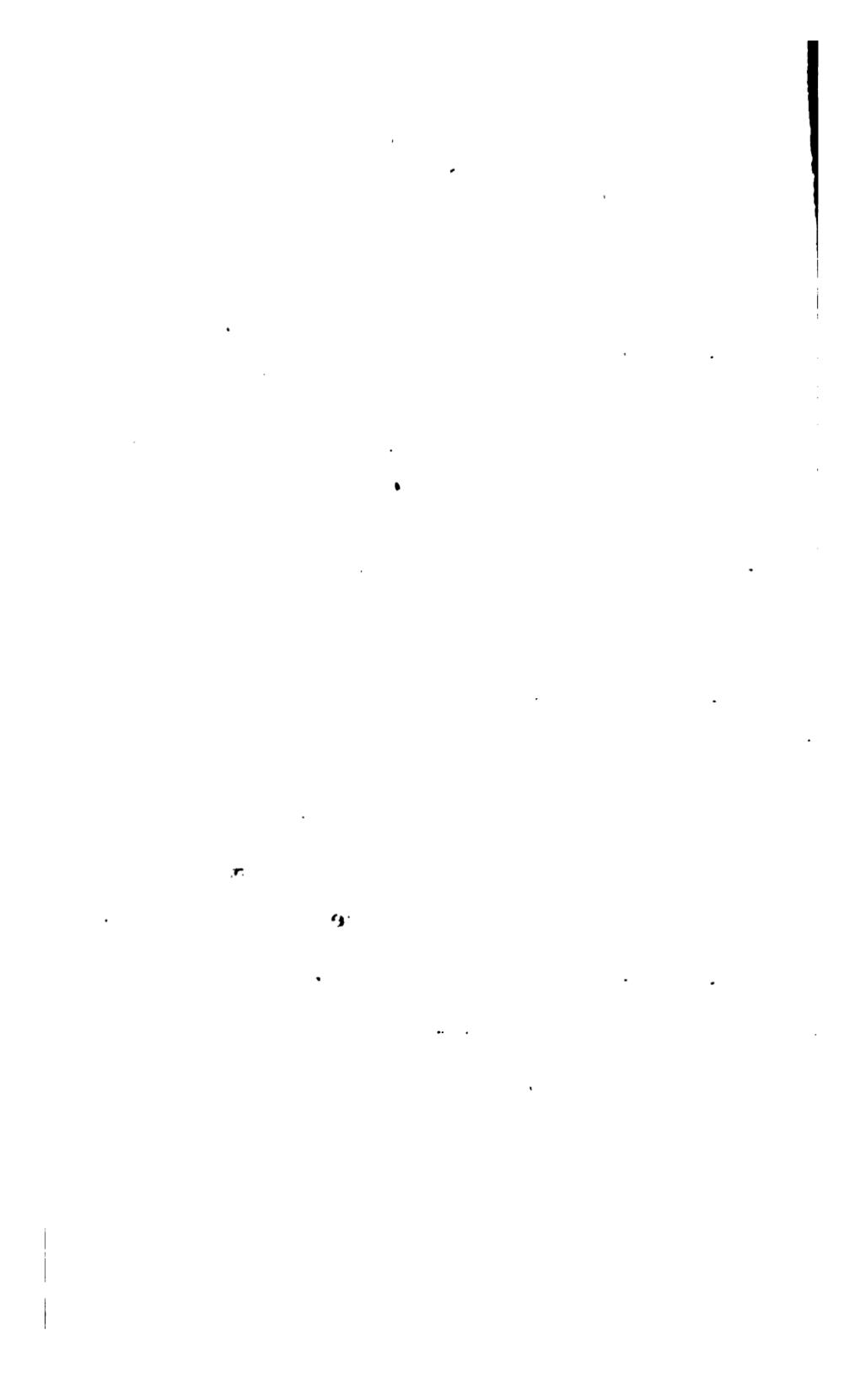
Si n'avez point encore tendre amourette,  
De tel repos, beau gars, n'ayez souci ;  
Trop tôt viendra jour piteux, ou fillette  
A vous pauvret fera crier merci :  
Le sçais par moi ce que vous dis ici :  
Tout comme vous desirai Bachelette,  
Que bien aimasse et qui m'aimât aussi ;  
Or, que m'est il provenu de ceci ?  
Pleurai longtems, longtems contai fleurette,  
Et puis au bout, suis devenu mari.

*Bibliotheque des Amans, par M. SYLVAIN M. . . Paris.*

If the above is capable of a translation which should do it justice, it must be done by a skilful imitation of its antiquated language ; and by the pen of a Pope, or a Hawkins Browne \*.

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\* The ingenious author of *A Pipe of Tobacco*, in imitation of the manner of six different English poets ; and yet more distinguished for his admirable poem, *De Immortalitate Animi*, —one of the best specimens of the Latin poetry of the moderns.



## CHAPTER XII.

*Difficulty of translating Don Quixote, from its Idiomatic Phraseology.—Of the best Translations of that Romance.—Comparison of the Translation by Motteux with that by Smollet.*

THERE is perhaps no book to which it is more difficult to do perfect justice in a translation than the *Don Quixote of Cervantes*. This difficulty arises from the extreme frequency of its idiomatic phrases. As the Spanish language is in itself highly idiomatical, even the narrative part of the book is on that account difficult; but the colloquial part is studiously filled with idioms, as one of the principal characters continually expresses

himself in proverbs. Of this work there have been many English translations, executed, as may be supposed, with various degrees of merit. The two best of these, in my opinion, are the translations of Motteux and Smollet, both of them writers eminently well qualified for the task they undertook. It will not be foreign to the purpose of this Essay, If I shall here make a short comparative estimate of the merit of these translations \*.

*Smollet* inherited from nature a strong sense of ridicule, a great fund of original humour, and a happy versatility of talent, by which he could accommodate his style to almost every species of writing. He could adopt alternately the solemn, the lively, the sarcastic, the burlesque, and the vul-

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\* The translation published by Motteux bears, in the title-page, that it is the work of several hands; but as of these Mr Motteux was the principal, and revised and corrected the parts that were translated by others, which indeed we have no means of discriminating from his own, I shall, in the following comparison, speak of him as the author of the whole work.

gar. To these qualifications he joined an inventive genius, and a vigorous imagination. As he possessed talents equal to the composition of original works of the same species with the romance of Cervantes ; so it is not perhaps possible to conceive a writer more completely qualified to give a perfect translation of that romance.

*Motteux*, with no great abilities as an original writer, appears to me to have been endowed with a strong perception of the ridiculous in human character ; a just discernment of the weaknesses and follies of mankind. He seems likewise to have had a great command of the various styles which are accommodated to the expression both of grave burlesque, and of low humour. Inferior to Smollet in inventive genius, he seems to have equalled him in every quality which was essentially requisite to a translator of *Don Quixote*. It may therefore be supposed, that the contest between them will be nearly equal, and the question of preference very difficult to be decided. It would have been so, had Smollet confided in his

own strength, and bestowed on his task that time and labour which the length and difficulty of the work required: but Smollet too often wrote in such circumstances, that dispatch was his primary object. He found various English translations at hand, which he judged might save him the labour of a new composition. *Jarvis* could give him faithfully the sense of his author; and it was necessary only to polish his asperities, and lighten his heavy and awkward phraseology. To contend with Motteux, Smollet found it necessary to assume the armour of *Jarvis*. This author had purposely avoided, through the whole of his work, the smallest coincidence of expression with Motteux, whom, with equal presumption and injustice, he accuses in his preface of having “ taken his version “ wholly from the French \*.” We find,

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\* The only French translation of *Don Quixote* with which I am acquainted, is that to which is subjoined a continuation of the Knight’s adventures, in two supplemental volumes. This translation, which, from a note on the Dedication, appears to be the work of M. Lancelot, has undergone number-

therefore, both in the translation of Jarvis and Smollet, which is little else than an improved edition of the former, that there is a studied rejection of the phraseology of

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less editions, and is therefore, I presume, the best; perhaps indeed the only one, except a very old version, which is mentioned in the Preface, as being quite literal, and very antiquated in its style. It is therefore to be presumed, that when Jarvis accuses Motteux of having taken his version entirely from the French, he refers to that translation above mentioned, to which Le Sage has given a supplement. If this be the case, we may confidently affirm, that Jarvis has done Motteux the greatest injustice. On comparing his translation with the French, there is a discrepancy so absolute and universal, that there does not arise the smallest suspicion that he had ever seen that version. Let any passage be compared *ad aperturam libri*; as, for example, the following:

“ De simples huttes tenoient lieu de maisons, et de palais  
“ aux habitans de la terre; les arbres se defaisant, d'eux-  
“ memes de leurs écorces, leur fournissoient de quoi couv-  
“rir leurs cabanes, et se garantir de l'intempérie des sai-  
“ sons.”

“ The tough and attenuous cork-trees did of themselves,  
“ and without other art than their native liberality, dismiss  
“ and impart their broad, light bark, which served to cover  
“ those lowly huts, propped up with rough-hewn stakes, that  
“ were first built as a shelter against the inclemencies of the  
“ air.” —MOTTEUX.

Motteux. Now, Motteux, though he has frequently assumed too great a licence, both

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“ La beaute n'étoit point un avantage dangereux aux jennes filles ; elles alloient libtement partout, étalant sans artifice et sans dessein tous les présens que leur avoit fait la Nature, sans se cacher davantage, qu' autant que l'honnêteté commune à tous les siecles l'a toujours demandé.”

“ Then was the time, when innocent beautiful young shepherdesses went tripping over the hills and vales, their lovely hair sometimes plaited, sometimes loose and flowing, clad in no other vestment but what was necessary to cover decently what modesty would always have concealed.” —  
MOTTEUX.

It will not, I believe, be asserted, that this version of Motteux bears any traces of being copied from the French, which is quite licentious and paraphrastical. But when we subjoin the original, we shall perceive, that he has given a very just and easy translation of the Spanish.

*Los valientes alcornoques despedian de sí sin otro artificio que el de su cortesía, sus anchas y livianas cortezas, sin que se commengaron á cubrir las casas, sobre rusticas estacas sustentadas, no mas que para defensa de las inclemencias del cielo.*

*ENTONCES sí, que andaban las simples y hermosas zagaleras de valle en valle, y de otero en otero, en trenza y en cabello, sin mas vestidos de aquellos que eran menester para cubrir honestamente lo que la honestidad quiere.*

both in adding to and retrenching from the ideas of his original, has, upon the whole, a very high degree of merit as a translator. In the adoption of corresponding idioms he has been eminently fortunate, and, as in these there is no great latitude, he has in general preoccupied the appropriate phrases; so that a succeeding translator, who proceeded on the rule of invariably rejecting his phraseology, must have, in general, altered for the worse. Such, I have said, was the rule laid down by Jarvis, and by his copyist and improver, Smollet, who, by thus absurdly rejecting what his own judgment and taste must have approved, has produced a composition decidedly inferior, on the whole, to that of Motteux. While I justify the opinion I have now given, by comparing several passages of both translations, I shall readily allow full credit to the performance of Smollet, wherever I find that there is a real superiority to the work of his rival translator.

AFTER Don Quixote's unfortunate encounter with the Yanguesian carriers, in

which the Knight, Sancho, and Rozinante, were all most grievously mauled, his faithful squire lays his master across his ass, and conducts him to the nearest inn, where a miserable bed is made up for him in a cock-loft. Cervantes then proceeds as follows:

*En esta maldita cama sè accostó Don Quixote: y luego la ventera y su hija le emplastaron de arriba abaxo, alumbrandoles Maritornes: que asi se llamaba la Asturiana. Y como al vizmalle, viese la ventera tan acardenalado á partes á Don Quixote, dixo que aquello mas parecian golpes que caida. No fuéreron golpes, dixo Sancho, sino que la pena tenia muchos picos y tropezones, y que cada uno habia hecho su cardinal, y tambien le dixo: haga vuestra merced, señora, de manera que queden algunas estopas, que no faltará quien las haya menester, que tambien me duelen á mí un poco los lomos. Desa manera, respondió la ventera, tambien debistes vos de caer? No caí, dico Sancho Panza, sino que del sobresalto que tome de ver caer á mí amo, de tal manera me duele á mí el*

*cuerpo, que me parece que me han dado mil palos.*

*Translation by Motteux.*

“ IN this ungracious bed was the Knight  
“ laid to rest his belaboured carcase ; and  
“ presently the hostess and her daughter  
“ anointed and plastered him all over, while  
“ Maritornes (for that was the name of the  
“ Asturian wench) held the candle. The  
“ hostess, while she greased him, wonder-  
“ ing to see him so bruised all over, I fan-  
“ cy, said she, those bumps look much more  
“ like a dry beating than a fall. 'Twas no  
“ dry beating, mistress, I promise you,  
“ quoth Sancho ; but the rock had I know  
“ not how many cragged ends and knobs,  
“ and every one of them gave my master a  
“ token of its kindness. And by the  
“ way, forsooth, continued he, I beseech  
“ you save a little of that same tow and  
“ ointment for me too, for I don't know  
“ what's the matter with my back, but I  
“ fancy I stand mainly in want of a little

“ greasing too. What, I suppose you fell  
“ too? quoth the landlady. Not I, quoth  
“ Sancho, but the very fright that I took to  
“ see my master tumble down the rock, has  
“ so wrought upon my body, that I am as  
“ sore as if I had been sadly mauled.”

*Translation by Smallet.*

“ In this wretched bed Don Quixote having laid himself down, was anointed from head to foot by the good woman and her daughter, while Mariternea (that was the Asturian's name) stood hard by, holding a light. The landlady, in the course of her application, perceiving the Knight's whole body black and blue, observed, that those marks seemed rather the effects of drubbing than of a fall; but Sancho affirmed she was mistaken, and that the marks in question were occasioned by the knobs and corners of the rocks among which he fell. And now, I think of it, said he, pray, Madam, manage matters so as to leave a little of your ointment,

“ for it will be needed, I'll assure you : my  
“ own loins are none of the soundest at  
“ present. What, did you fall too ? said  
“ she. I can't say I did, answered the  
“ squire ; but I was so infected by seeing  
“ my master tumble, that my whole body  
“ akes, as much as if I had been cudgelled  
“ without mercy.”

Of these two translations, it will hardly be denied that Motteux's is both easier in point of style, and conveys more forcibly the humour of the dialogue in the original. A few contrasted phrases will shew clearly the superiority of the former.

*Motteux.* “ In this ungracious bed was  
“ the Knight laid to rest his belaboured  
“ carcase.”

*Smollet.* “ In this wretched bed Don  
“ Quixote having laid himself down.”

*Motteux.* “ While Maritornes (for that  
“ was the name of the Asturian-wench)  
“ held the candle.”

*Smollet.* “ While Maritornes (that was  
“ the Asturian’s name) stood hard by, hold-  
“ ing a light.”

*Motteux.* “ The hostess, while she grea-  
“ sed him.”

*Smollet.* “ The landlady, in the course  
“ of her application.”

*Motteux.* “ I fancy, said she, those  
“ bumps look much more like a dry beat-  
“ ing than a fall.”

*Smollet.* “ Observed, that those marks  
“ seemed rather the effects of drubbing than  
“ of a fall.”

*Motteux.* “ ’Twas no dry beating, mis-  
“ tress, I promise you, quoth Sancho.”

*Smollet.* “ But Sancho affirmed she was  
“ in a mistake.”

*Motteux.* “ And, by the way, forsooth,  
“ continued he, I beseech you save a little  
“ of that same tow and ointment for me;

“ for I don’t know what’s the matter with  
“ my back, but I fancy I stand mainly in  
“ need of a little greasing too.”

*Smollet.* “ And now, I think of it, said  
“ he, pray, Madam, manage matters so as  
“ to leave a little of your ointment, for it  
“ will be needed, I’ll assure you : my own  
“ loins are none of the soundest at pre-  
“ sent.”

*Motteux.* “ What, I suppose you fell  
“ too ? quoth the landlady. Not I, quoth  
“ Sancho, but the very fright,” &c.

*Smollet.* “ What, did you fall too ? said  
“ she. I can’t say I did, answered the  
“ squire ; but I was so infected,” &c.

THERE is not only more ease of expression and force of humour in Motteux’s translation of the above passages than in Smollet’s, but greater fidelity to the original. In one part, *no fueron golpes*, Smollet has improperly changed the first person for the third, or the colloquial style for the

narrative, which materially weakens the spirit of the passage. *Cada uno habia hecho su cardenal* is most happily translated by Motteux, "every one of them gave him a token of its kindness;" but in Smollet's version, this spirited clause of the sentence evaporates altogether.—*Algunas estopas* is more faithfully rendered by Motteux than by Smollet. In the latter part of the passage, when the hostess jeeringly says to Sancho, *Desa manéra tambien debistes vos de caer?* the squire, impatient to wipe off that sly insinuation against the veracity of his story, hastily answers, *No cai.* To this Motteux has done ample justice, "Not I, "quoth Sancho." But Smollet, instead of the arch effrontery, which the author meant to mark by this answer, gives a tame apologetic air to the squire's reply, "I can't say "I did, answered the squire." *Don Quix.*  
*par. 1. cap. 16.*

Don Quixote and Sancho, travelling in the night through a desert valley, have their ears assailed at once by a combination of the most horrible sounds, the roaring of ca-

taracts, clanking of chains, and loud strokes repeated at regular intervals; all which persuade the Knight, that his courage is immediately to be tried in a most perilous adventure. Under this impression, he felicitates himself on the immortal renown he is about to acquire, and, brandishing his lance, thus addresses Sancho, whose joints are quaking with affright :

*Asi que aprieta un poco las cinchas a Rocinante, y quedate a Dios; y asperame aqui hasta tres dias, no mas, en los quales si no volviere, puedes tú volverte á nuestra aldea, y desde allí, por hacerme merced y buena obra, irás al Toboso, donde dirás al incomparable señora mia Dulcinea, que su cautivo caballero murio por acometer cosas, que le hiciesen digno de poder llamarse suya.* Don Quix. par. 1. cap. 20.

*Translation by Motteux.*

“ Come, girth Rosinante straiter, and  
“ then Providence protect thee: Thou may’st

“ stay for me here ; but if I do not return  
“ in three days, go back to our village, and  
“ from thence, for my sake, to Toboso,  
“ where thou shalt say to my incomparable  
“ lady Dulcinea, that her faithful knight  
“ fell a sacrifice to love and honour, while  
“ he attempted things that might have made  
“ him worthy to be called her adorer.”

*Translation by Smollet.*

“ THEREFORE straiten Rozinante's girth,  
“ recommend thyself to God, and wait for  
“ me in this place, three days at farthest ;  
“ within which time if I come not back,  
“ thou mayest return to our village, and,  
“ as the last favour and service done to me,  
“ go from thence to Toboso, and inform my  
“ incomparable mistress Dulcinea, that  
“ her captive knight died in attempting  
“ things that might render him worthy to  
“ be called her lover.”

On comparing these two translations, that of Smollet appears to me to have better

preserved the ludicrous solemnity of the original. This is particularly observable in the beginning of the sentence, where there is a most humorous association of two counsels very opposite in their nature, the recommending himself to God, and girding Rozinante. In the request, “ and as the “ last favour and service done to me, go “ from thence to Toboso ; ” the translations of Smollet and Motteux are, perhaps, nearly equal in point of solemnity, but the simplicity of the original is better preserved by Smollet \*.

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\* Perhaps a parody was here intended of the famous epitaph of Sironides, on the brave Spartans who fell at Thermopylae :

Ω ξω, ἀγαλλε Λακεδαιμονίου, ὅτι τεδε  
Καίμεται, τας κίνητος βίραστος πειθέρασται.

“ O stranger, carry back the news to Lacedemon, that “ we died here to prove our obedience to her laws.” This, it will be observed, may be translated, or at least closely imitated, in the very words of Cervantes ; *dirás—que su caballero mario por acometer cosas, que le hiciesen digno de poder llamaras suyo.*

SANCHO, after endeavouring in vain to dissuade his master from engaging in this perilous adventure, takes advantage of the darkness to tie Rosinante's legs together, and thus to prevent him from stirring from the spot; which being done, to divert the Knight's impatience under this supposed enchantment, he proceeds to tell him, in his usual strain of rustic buffoonery, a long story of a cock and a bull, which thus begins: “*Erase que se era, el bien que viniere para todos sea, y el mal para quien lo fuere á buscar; y advierta vuestra merced, señor mio, que el principio que los antiguos dieron a sus consejas, no fue así como quiera, que fue una sentencia de Caton Zonzorino Romano que dice, y el mal para quien lo fueré á buscar.*” *Ibid.*

IN this passage, the chief difficulties that occur to the translator are, *first*, the beginning, which seems to be a customary prologue to a nursery-tale among the Spaniards, which must therefore be translated by a corresponding phraseology in English; and, *secondly*, the blunder of *Caton Zonzorino*.

Both these are, I think, most happily hit off by Motteux. “ In the days of yore, when “ it was as it was, good betide us all, and “ evil to him that evil seeks. And here, “ Sir, you are to take notice, that they of old “ did not begin their tales in an ordinary “ way ; for 'twas a saying of a wise man, “ whom they call'd Cato the Roman Ton- “ sor, that said, Evil to him that evil seeks.” Smollet thus translates the passage : “ There “ was, so there was ; the good that shall “ fall betide us all ; and he that seeks evil “ may meet with the devil. Your worship “ may take notice, that the beginning of “ ancient tales is not just what came into “ the head of the teller : no, they always “ began with some saying of Cato, the cen- “ sor of Rome, like this, of ‘ He that seeks “ evil may meet with the devil.’ ”

The beginning of the story, thus translated, has neither any meaning in itself, nor does it resemble the usual preface of a foolish tale. Instead of *Caton Zonzorino*, a blunder which apologises for the mention of Cato by such an ignorant clown as Sancho,

we find the blunder rectified by Smollet, and Cato distinguished by his proper epithet of the Censor. This is a manifest impropriety in the last translator, for which no other cause can be assigned, than that his predecessor had preoccupied the blunder of *Cato the Tonsor*, which, though not a translation of *Zonzorino*, (the purblind), was yet a very happy parallelism.

IN the course of the same cock-and-bull story, Sancho thus proceeds: “ *Asi que, yendo dias y viniendo dias, el diablo que no duerme y que todo lo añasca, hizo de manera, que el amor que el pastor tenia á su pastora se volviese en omecillo y mala voluntad, y la causa fué segun malas lenguas, una cierta cantidad de relillos que ella le dió, tales que pasaban de la raya, y llegaban á lo vedado, y fue tanto lo que el pastor la aborreció de alli adelante, que por no verla se quiso ausentar de aquella tierra, é irse donde sus ojos no la viesen jamas; la Toralva, que se vió desdeñada del Lope, luego le quiso bien mas que nunca le había querido.*” *Ibid.*

*Translation by Motteux.*

“ WELL, but, as you know, days come  
“ and go, and time and straw makes med-  
“ lars ripe ; so it happened, that after seve-  
“ ral days coming and going, the devil, who  
“ seldom lies dead in a ditch, but will have  
“ a finger in every pye, so brought it about,  
“ that the shepherd fell out with his sweet-  
“ heart, insomuch that the love he bore her  
“ turned into dudgeon and ill-will ; and the  
“ cause was, by report of some mischievous  
“ tale-carriers, that bore no good-will to ei-  
“ ther party, for that the shepherd thought  
“ her no better than she should be, a little  
“ loose i’ the hilts, &c \*. Thereupon being  
“ grievous in the dumps about it, and now  
“ bitterly hating her, he e’en resolved to  
“ leave that country to get out of her sight :  
“ for now, as every dog has his day, the  
“ wench perceiving he came no longer a  
“ suitering to her, but rather toss’d his

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\* One expression is omitted which is a little too gross.

“ nose at her and shunn'd her, she began to  
“ love him, and doat upon him like any  
“ thing.”

I believe it will be allowed, that the above translation not only conveys the complete sense and spirit of the original, but that it greatly improves upon its humour. When Smollet came to translate this passage, he must have severely felt the hardship of that law he had imposed on himself, of invariably rejecting the expressions of Motteux, who had in this instance been singularly successful. It will not therefore surprise us, if we find the new translator to have here failed as remarkably as his predecessor has succeeded.

*Translation by Smollet.*

“ AND so, in process of time, the devil,  
“ who never sleeps, but *wants to have a fin-*  
“ *ger in every pye*, managed matters in  
“ such a manner, that the shepherd's love  
“ for the shepherdess was turned into ma-

“ lice and deadly hate: and the cause, according to evil tongues, was a certain quantity of small jealousies she gave him, exceeding all bounds of measure. And such was the abhorrence the shepherd conceived for her, that, in order to avoid the sight of her, he resolved to absent himself from his own country, and go where he should never set eyes on her again. Toralvo finding herself despised by Lope, began to love him more than ever.”

SMOLLET, conscious that in the above passage Motteux had given the best possible free translation, and that he had supplanted him in the choice of corresponding idioms, seems to have piqued himself on a rigid adherence to the very letter of his original. The only English idiom, being a plagiarism from Motteux, “wants to have a finger in every pye,” seems to have been adopted from absolute necessity: the Spanish phrase would not bear a literal version, and no other idiom was to be found but that which Motteux had preoccupied.

From an inflexible adherence to the same law, of rejecting the phraseology of Motteux, we find in every page of this new translation numberless changes for the worse:

*Se que no mira del mal ojo á la mochacha.*

“ I have observed he casts a sheep’s eye  
“ at the wench.” *Motteux.*

“ I can perceive he has no dislike to the  
“ girl.” *Smollet.*

*Teresa me pusieron en el bautismo, nombre  
mondo y escueto, sin anadiduras, ni cortopizas, ni arrequives de Dones ni Donas.*

“ I was christened plain Teresa, without  
“ any fiddle-faddle, or addition of Madam,  
“ or Your Ladyship.” *Motteux.*

“ Teresa was I christened, a bare and  
“ simple name, without the addition, garniture,  
“ and embroidery of Don or Donna.”  
*Smollet.*

*Sigue tu cuento, Sancho.*

“ Go on with thy story, Sancho.” *Motteux.*

“ Follow thy story, Sancho.” *Smollet.*

*Yo confieso que he andado algo risueño en demasia.*

“ I confess I carried the jest too far.”  
*Motteux.*

“ I see I have exceeded a little in my  
“ pleasantry.” *Smollet.*

*De mis viñas vengo, no se nada, no soy  
amigo de saber vidas agenadas.*

“ I never thrust my nose into other men’s  
“ porridge; it’s no bread and butter of  
“ mine: Every man for himself, and God  
“ for us all, say I.” *Motteux.*

“ I prune my own vine, and I know no-

“ thing about thine. I never meddle with other people’s concerns.” *Smollet.*

*Y advierta que ya tengo edad para dar consejos. Quien bien tiene, y mal escoge, por bien que se enoja, no se venga \**.

“ Come, Master, I have hair enough in my beard to make a counsellor: he that will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay.” *Motteux.*

“ Take notice that I am of an age to give good counsels. He that hath good in his view, and yet will not evil eschew, his folly deserveth to rue.” *Smollet.* Rather than adopt a corresponding proverb, as Motteux has done, Smollet chuses, in this instance, and in many others, to make a proverb for himself, by giving a literal version of the original in a sort of doggrel rhyme.

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\* Thus it stands in all the editions by the Royal Academy of Madrid; though in Lord Carteret’s edition the latter part of the proverb is given thus, apparently with more propriety: *del mal que le viene no se enoja.*

“Vive Roque, que es la señora nuestra ama  
mas ligera que un alcotan, y que puede ense-  
ñar al mas diestro Cordobes o Mexicano.

“By the Lord Harry, quoth Sancho, our  
Lady Mistress is as nimble as an eel.  
“Let me be hang'd, if I don't think she  
“might teach the best Jockey in Cordova or  
“Mexico to mount a-horseback.” Motteux.

“By St Roque, cried Sancho, my Lady  
Mistress is as light as a hawk \*, and can  
teach the most dextrous horseman to  
ride.” Smollet.

THE chapter which treats of the puppet-show, is well translated both by Motteux and Smollet. But the discourse of the boy who explains the story of the piece, in Motteux's translation, appears somewhat more consonant to the phraseology commonly

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\* *Mas ligera que un alcotan* is more literally translated by Smollet than by Motteux; but if Smollet piqued himself on fidelity, why was *Cordobes o Mexicano* omitted.

used on such occasions :—“ Now, gentle-  
“ men, in the next place, mark that perso-  
“ nage that peeps out there with a crown  
“ on his head, and a sceptre in his hand :  
“ That’s the Emperor Charlemain.—Mind  
“ how the Emperor turns his back up-  
“ on him.—Don’t you see that Moor ;  
“ —hear what a smack he gives on her  
“ sweet lips,— and see how she spits  
“ and wipes her mouth with her white  
“ smoke-sleeve. See how she takes on,  
“ and tears her hair for very madness,  
“ as if it was to blame for this affront.—  
“ Now mind what a din and hurly-burly  
“ there is.” *Motteux.* This jargon ap-  
pears to me to be more characteristic  
of the speaker than the following : “ And  
“ that personage who now appears with a  
“ crown on his head and a sceptre in his  
“ hand, is the Emperor Charlemagne.—Be-  
“ hold how the Emperor turns about and  
“ walks off.—Don’t you see that Moor ;—  
“ Now mind how he prints a kiss in the  
“ very middle of her lips, and with what  
“ eagerness she spits, and wipes them with  
“ the sleeve of her shift, lamenting aloud,  
“ and tearing for anger her beautiful hair,

“ as if it had been guilty of the trans-  
“ gression \*.”

IN the same scene of the puppet-show, the scraps of the old Moorish ballad are translated by Motteux with a corresponding *naïveté* of expression, which it seems to me impossible to exceed.

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\* Smollet has here mistaken the sense of the original, *como si ellos tuvieran la culpa del maleficio*: She did not blame the hair for being guilty of the transgression or offence, but for being the cause of the Moor's transgression, or, as Motteux has properly translated it, “this affront.” In another part of the same chapter, Smollet has likewise mistaken the sense of the original. When the boy remarks, that the Moors don't observe much form or ceremony in their judicial trials, Don Quixote contradicts him, and tells him there must always be a regular process and examination of evidence to prove matters of fact, “*para sacar una verdad en limpio, menester son muchas pruebas y reprobas.*” Smollet applies this observation of the Knight to the boy's long-winded story, and translates the passage, “There is not so much proof and counter proof required to bring truth to light.” In both these passages Smollet has departed from his prototype, Jarvis.

*Jugando está á las tablas Don Gayférax,*

*Que ya de Melisendra está olvidado.*

“ Now Gayferos the live-long day,

“ Oh, errant shame! at draughts doth play;

“ And, as at court most husbands do,

“ Forgets his lady fair and true.” *Motteux.*

“ Now Gayferos at tables playing,

“ Of Melisendra thinks no more.” *Smollet.*

*Caballero, si á Francia ides,*

*Por Gayférax preguntad.*

“ Quoth Melisendra, if perchance,

“ Sir Traveller, you go for France,

“ For pity’s sake, ask, when you’re there,

“ For Gayferos, my husband dear.” *Motteux.*

“ Sir Knight, if you to France do go,

“ For Gayferos inquire.” *Smollet.*

How miserably does the new translation sink in the above comparison! Yet Smollet was a good poet, and most of the verse translations interspersed through this work are executed with ability. It is on this head that Motteux has assumed to himself the

greatest licence. He has very presumptuously mutilated the poetry of Cervantes, by leaving out many entire stanzas from the larger compositions, and suppressing some of the smaller altogether: Yet the translation of those parts which he has retained, is possessed of much poetical merit; and in particular, those verses which are of a graver cast, are, in my opinion, superior to those of his rival. The song in the first volume, which in the original is entitled, *Cancion de Grisóstomo*, and which Motteux has entitled, *The Despairing Lover*, is greatly abridged by the suppression of more than one-half of the stanzas in the original; but the translation, so far as it goes, is highly poetical. The translation of this song by Smollet, though inferior as a poem, is, perhaps, more valuable on the whole, because more complete. There is, however, only a single passage, in which he maintains with Motteux a contest which is nearly equal;

## v 4

O thou, whose cruelty and hate,  
The tortures of my breast proclaim,  
Behold, how willingly to fate  
I offer this devoted frame.

If thou, when I am past all pain,  
 Shouldst think my fall deserves a tear,  
 Let not one single drop distain  
 Those eyes, so killing and so clear.  
 No ! rather let thy mirth display  
 The joys that in thy bosom glow :  
 Ah ! need I bid that heart be gay,  
 Which always triumph'd in my woe. *Smollet.*

It will be allowed that there is much merit in these lines, and that the last stanza in particular is eminently beautiful and delicate. Yet there is, in my opinion, an equal vein of poetry, and more passion, in the corresponding verses of Motteux :

O thou, by whose destructive hate  
 I'm hurry'd to this doleful fate,  
 When I'm no more, thy pity spare !  
 I dread thy tears ; oh, spare them then—  
 But, oh ! I rave, I was too vain—  
 My death can never cost a tear ! *Motteux.*

IN the song of Cardenio, there is a happy combination of tenderness of expression with ingenious thought ; the versification is likewise of a peculiar structure, 'the second

line forming an echo to the first. The song has been translated in a corresponding measure both by Motteux and Smollet ; but by the latter with far inferior merit.

### CANCION DE CARDENIO.

#### I.

*Quien menoscaba mis bienes ?*

*Desdene.*

*Y quien aumenta mis duelos ?*

*Los Zelos.*

*Y quien prueba mi paciencia ?*

*Ausencia.*

*De ese modo en mi dolencia,*

*Ningun remedio se alcanza,*

*Pues me matan la Esperanza,*

*Desdene, Zelos, y Ausencia.*

#### II.

*Quien me causa este dolor ?*

*Amor.*

*Y quien mi gloria repuna ?*

*Fortuna.*

*Y quien consiente mi duelo ?*

*El Cielo.*

*De ese modo yo rezalo,  
Morir de este mal extraño,  
Pues se curan en mi dana  
Amor, Fortuna, y el Cielo.*

## III.

*Quien mejorará mi suerte?*

*La Muerte.*

*Y el bien de amor, quien le alcanza?*

*Mudanza.*

*Y sus malos quien los cura?*

*Locura.*

*De ese modo no es cordura*

*Querer curar la pasión;*

*Quando los remedios son*

*Muerte, Mudanza, y Locura.*

## CARDENIO'S SONG, BY MOTTEUX.

## I.

What makes me languish and complain?

O, 'tis *Despair!*

What yet more fiercely tortures me?

'Tis *Jealousy.*

How have I my patience lost?

*By Absence crest.*

Then, Hope, farewell, there's no relief;

I sink beneath oppressing grief;

Nor can a wretch, without despair,  
*Scorn, Jealousy, and Absence*, bear.

## II.

What in my breast this anguish drove?

*Intruding Love.*

Who could such mighty ills create?

*Blind Fortune's hate.*

What cruel powers may fate approve?

*The Powers above.*

Then let me bear, and cease to moan;

"Tis glorious thus to be undone:

When these invade, who dares oppose?

*Heaven, Love, and Fortune* are my foes.

## III.

Where shall I find a speedy cure,

*Oh! Death is sure*

No milder means to set me free?

*Inconstancy.*

Can nothing else my pains assuage?

*Distracting Rage.*

What, die or change? *Lucinda* lose?

O let me rather madness chuse!

But judge, ye gods, what we endure,

When *death* or *madness* are a cure!

IN the last four lines, Motteux has used more liberty with the thought of the original than is allowable for a translator. It must be owned, however, that he has much improved it.

### CARDENIO's SONG, BY SMOLLET.

#### I.

Ah ! what inspires my woful strain ?

Unkind disdain !

Ah ! what augments my misery ?

Fell Jealousy !

Or say, what hath my patience worn ?

An absent lover's scorn !

The torments then that I endure

No mortal remedy can cure :

For every languid hope is slain

By Absence, Jealousy, Disdain.

#### II.

From Love, my unrelenting foe,

These sorrows flow :

My infant glory's overthrown

By Fortune's frown.

Confirm'd in this my wretched state

By the decrees of Fate,

In death alone I hope release,  
From this compounded dire disease,  
Whose cruel pangs to aggravate,  
Fortune and Love conspire with Fate !

## III

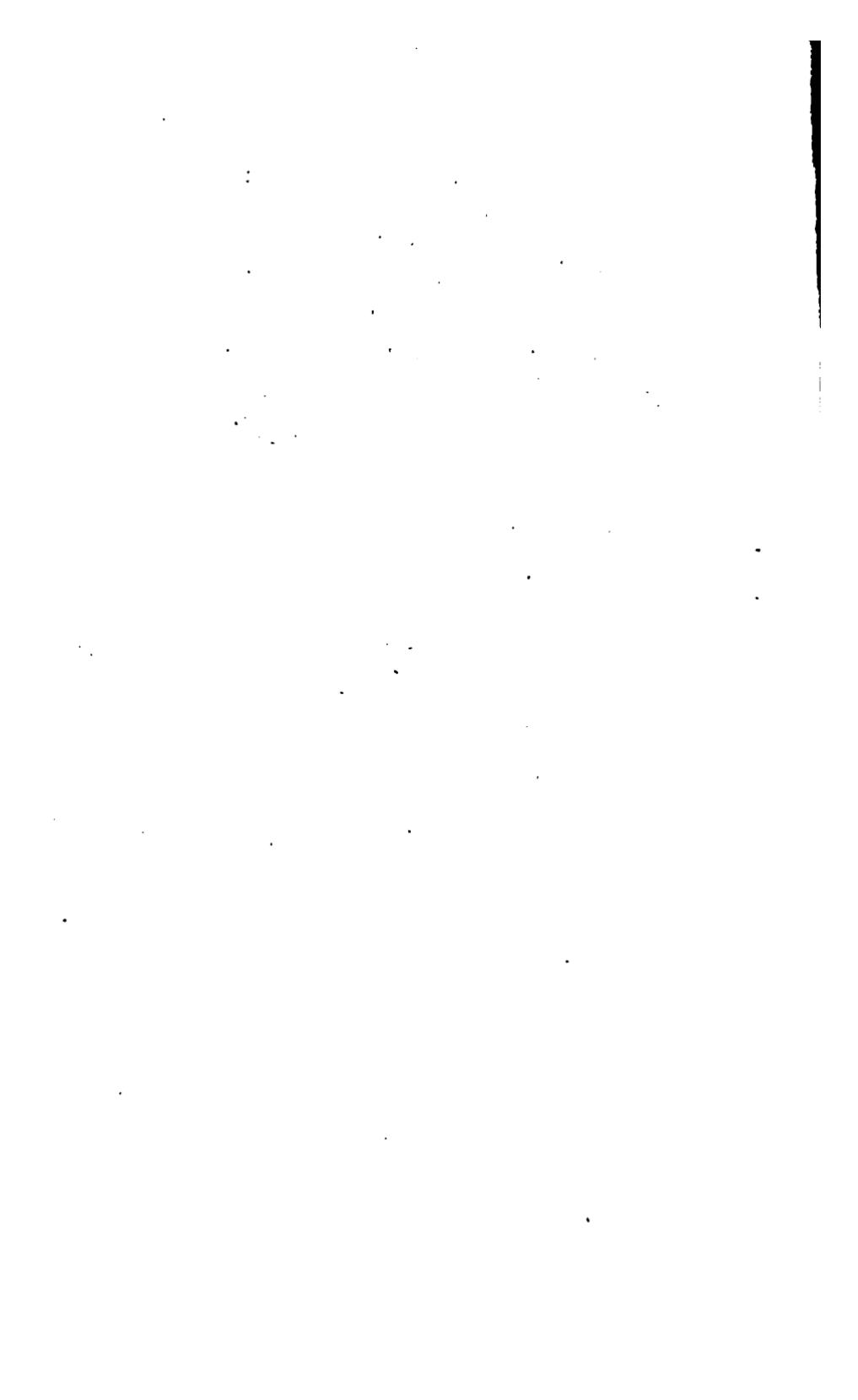
Ah ! what will mitigate my doom ?  
The silent tomb.  
Ah ! what retrieve departed joy ?  
Inconstancy !  
Or say, can ought but frenzy bear  
This tempest of despair !  
All other efforts then are vain  
To cure this soul-tormenting pain,  
That owns no other remedy  
Than madness, death, inconstancy.

“ The torments then that I endure—no mortal remedy can cure.” Who ever heard of a *mortal* remedy ? or who could expect to be cured by it ? In the next line, the epithet of *languid* is injudiciously given to Hope in this place ; for a *languid* or a *languishing* hope was already dying, and needed not so powerful a host of murderers to *slay* it, as Absence, Jealousy, and Disdain.—In short, the latter translation ap-

pears to me to be, on the whole, of much inferior merit to the former. I have remarked, that Motteux excels his rival chiefly in the translation of those poems that are of a graver cast. But perhaps he is censurable for having thrown too much gravity into the poems that are interspersed in this work; as Smollet is blameable on the opposite account, of having given them too much the air of burlesque. In the song which Don Quixote composed while he was doing penance in the *Sierra-Morena*, beginning *Arboles Yeras y Plantas*, every stanza of which ends with *Del Toboso*, the author intended, that the composition should be quite characteristic of its author, a ludicrous compound of gravity and absurdity. In the translation of Motteux, there is, perhaps, too much gravity; but Smollet has rendered the composition altogether burlesque. The same remark is applicable to the song of Antonio, beginning *Yo sé Olalla, que me adoras*, and to many of the other poems.

ON the whole, I am inclined to think, that the version of Motteux is by far the

best we have yet seen of the Romance of Cervantes; and that if corrected in its licentious abbreviations and enlargements, and in some other particulars which I have noticed in the course of this comparison, we should have nothing to desire superior to it in the way of translation.



## CHAPTER XIII.

*Other Characteristics of Composition, which render Translation difficult.—Antiquated Terms—New Terms—Verba ardentia.—Simplicity of Thought and Expression—In Prose—In Poetry.—Naïveté in the Latter.—Chaulieu—Parnell—Theocritus—La Fontaine.—Series of Minute Distinctions marked by Characteristic Terms.—Strada.—Florid Style and Vague Expression.—Pliny's Natural History.*

**I**N the two preceding chapters I have treated pretty fully of what I consider as a principal difficulty in translation, the permutation of idioms. I shall in this chapter touch upon several other characteristics of com-

sition, which, in proportion as they are found in the original works, serve greatly to enhance the difficulty of doing complete justice to them in a translation.

1. THE poets, in all languages, have a licence peculiar to themselves, of employing a mode of expression very remote from the diction of prose, and still more from that of ordinary speech. Under this licence, it is customary for them to use antiquated terms, to invent new ones, and to employ a glowing and rapturous phraseology, or what Cicero terms *Verba ardentia*. To do justice to these peculiarities in a translation, by adopting similar terms and phrases, will be found extremely difficult ; yet without such assimilation, the translation presents no just copy of the original. It would require no ordinary skill to transfuse into another language the thoughts of the following passages, in a similar species of phraseology :

*Antiquated Terms:*

For Nature crescent doth not grow alone  
In thews and bulk ; but as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves thee now,  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmire  
The virtue of his will.—

SHAK. *Hamlet, Act. 1.**New Terms:*

— So over many a tract  
Of heaven they march'd, and many a province wide,  
Tenfold the length of this terrane : at last  
Far in th' horizon to the north appear'd  
From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretcht  
In battailous aspect, and nearer view  
Bristl'd with upright beams innumerable  
Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields  
Various with boastful argument pourtrayed.

Paradise Lost, B. 6.

— All come to this ? the hearts  
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave  
The wishes, do discandy—

SHAK. *Ant. & Cleop. Act 4. Sc. 10.*

Glowing Phraseology, or *Verba ardentia*:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er ye are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness defend you  
From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this: Take physic, pomp!  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just. ——

SHAK. K. Lear.

— Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,  
Unwhipt of justice! Hide thee, thou bloody hand;  
Thou perjure, and thou simular of virtue,  
That art incestuous! Caitiff, shake to pieces,  
That under covert and convenient seeming  
Hast practis'd on man's life! Close pent up guilts,  
Rive your concealing continents, and ask  
Those dreadful summoners grace. —— *Ibid.*

Can any mortal mixture of Earth's mould,  
Breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment?  
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,  
And with these raptures moves the vocal air

To testify his hidden residence :  
How sweetly did they float upon the wings  
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night ;  
At every fall smoothing the raven down  
Of darkness till it smil'd : I have oft heard,  
Amidst the flow'ry-kirtled Naiades,  
My mother Circe, with the Sirens three,  
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,  
Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul  
And lap it in Elysium.——  
But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,  
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,  
I never heard till now.——

MILTON's *Comus*.

2. THERE is nothing more difficult to imitate successfully in a translation than that species of composition which conveys just, simple, and natural thoughts, in plain, unaffected, and perfectly appropriate terms ; and which rejects all those *aucupia sermonis*, those *lenocinia verborum*, which constitute what is properly termed *florid* or *fine writing*. It is much easier to imitate in a translation that kind of composition, (provided it be at all intelligible \*), which is brilliant and

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\* I add this qualification not without reason, as I intend afterwards to give an example of a species of florid writing.

rhetorical, which employs frequent antitheses, allusions, similes, metaphors, than it is to give a perfect copy of just, apposite, and natural sentiments, which are clothed in pure and simple language: For the former characters are strong and prominent, and therefore easily caught; whereas the latter have no striking attractions; their merit eludes altogether the general observation, and is discernible only to the most correct and chastened taste.

It would be difficult to approach to the beautiful simplicity of expression of the following passages, in any translation.

“ In those vernal seasons of the year,  
“ when the air is calm and pleasant, it were  
“ an injury and sullenness against Nature,  
“ not to go out to see her riches, and par-  
“ take in her rejoicing with heaven and  
“ earth.” *MILTON’s Tractate of Education.*

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which is difficult to be translated, because its meaning cannot be apprehended with precision.

“ CAN I be made capable of such great  
“ expectations, which those animals know  
“ nothing of, (happier by far in this regard  
“ than I am, if we must die alike), only to be  
“ disappointed at last? Thus placed, just  
“ upon the confines of another, better world,  
“ and fed with hopes of penetrating into it,  
“ and enjoying it, only to make a short ap-  
“ pearance here, and then to be shut out  
“ and totally sunk? Must I then, when I  
“ bid my last farewell to these walks, when  
“ I close these lids, and yonder blue re-  
“ gions and all this scene darken upon me  
“ and go out; must I then only serve to  
“ furnish dust to be mingled with the ashes  
“ of these herds and plants, or with this  
“ dirt under my feet? Have I been set so  
“ far above them in life, only to be levelled  
“ with them at death?” *WOLLASTON's Rel.  
of Nature, sect. ix.*

3. The union of just and delicate sentiments with simplicity of expression, is more rarely found in poetical composition than in prose; because the enthusiasm of poetry prompts rather to what is brilliant than what

is just, and is always led to clothe its conceptions in that species of figurative language which is very opposite to simplicity. It is natural, therefore, to conclude, that in those few instances which are to be found of a chastened simplicity of thought and expression in poetry, the difficulty of transposing the same character into a translation will be great, in proportion to the difficulty of attaining it in the original.

It is not easy to imitate in any translation the beautiful simplicity which characterises the following descriptive passage in the eighth eclogue of Virgil :

Sepibus in nostris, parvam te roscida mala,  
(Dux ego vester eram,) vidi cum matre legentem ;  
Alter ab undecimo tum me jam ceperat annus ;  
Jam fragiles poteram a terra contingere ramos :  
Ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error !

The kindred genius of Tasso in a corresponding passage of his *Aminta*, has here happily rivalled his master :

Essendo io fanciulletto, si che a pena  
Giunger potea con la man pargolletta

A corre i frutti dai piegati rami  
 Da gli arboscelli, intrinseco divenni  
 De la piu vaga e cara virginella  
 Che mai spiegasse al vento chioma d'oro.

Of a similar character, and therefore alike difficult to be justly translated, is that beautiful description of the *night*, in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*:

Nox erat, et placidum earpebant fessa soporem  
 Corpora per terras, sylvæque et sæva quiérant  
 Äquora; cùm medio volvuntur sidera lapsu:  
 Cùm tacet omnis ager, pecudes, pictæque volvures,  
 Quæque lacus latè liquidos, quæque aspera dumis  
 Rura tenent, somno positæ sub nocte silenti  
 Lenibant curas, et corda oblita laborum.

Of the same character are the following beautiful passages from Chaulieu:

Fontenay, lieu délicieux,  
 Où je vis d'abord la lumiere,  
 Bientot au bout de ma carriere,  
 Chez toi je joindrai mes ayeux.  
 Muses, qui dans ce lieu champêtre  
 Ayec soin me fites nourrir,

Of a similar character to that of the preceding examples, is that beautiful moral

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But now experience shews the bliss  
For which I fondly sought,  
Not worth the long impatient wish  
And ardour of the thought.

My youth met fortune fair array'd,  
In all her pomp she shone,  
And might, perhaps, have well essay'd  
To make her gifts my own.  
But when I saw the blessings shew'd  
On some unwilling mind,  
I left the chace, and own'd the pow'r  
Was justly painted blind.

I pass'd the glories which adorn  
The splendid courts of kings,  
And while the persons mov'd my scorn,  
I rose to scorn the things.

In this translation, which has the merit of faithfully transposing the sense of the original, with a great portion of its simplicity of expression, the following couplet is a very faulty deviation from that character of the style.

My errors cherish'd hope to smile  
On newly-born desire.

thought in the Elegy on Bion, by Theocritus or Moschus, of which the simplicity of the expression is so consonant to the tenderness of the sentiment :

Αἴ, αἴ, ταὶ μαλάχαι μὲν, ἐπὰν καὶ καῖπον ὄλανθαι  
 "Η τὰ χλωρὰ σέλινα, τό τ' ἴνθαλὲς, ὕλον ἄγηθον,  
 "Τσερον αὖ ζωντι, καὶ εἰς ἔτος αλλο φυοῦτι·  
 'Αμμες δ' οἱ μεγαλοι καὶ καρπεροι η σοφοὶ ανδρες,  
 'Οππότε πρῶτα θάνατος, ἀνάκοοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλαι  
 "Ευδομες εῦ μάλα μαχρὸν ἀτέρμονα τήγρειον ὕπνον.

This fine passage, which draws a sympathetic accord from every human breast, has been translated and imitated, perhaps, more frequently than any other in the works of the ancients. I know not, if it has ever met with greater justice than in the following translation by Helius Eobanus, in his Latin version of the Idyllia of Theocritus :

Hei mihi, quod malvæ virides et adhuc redolentes  
 Atque apium viride, et quod totum floret anethum,  
 Sæpe reviviscunt, et in annum deinde reverso  
 Sole renascuntur: nos magni, nosque potentes

Quam semel occidimus, quam primum fata subiimus,  
 Condimer in terram, atque intra cava basta reclusi  
 Perpetuo durum dormimus tempore somnium \*.

\* The inspired writer of the book of Job has conveyed the same sentiment, in language which has added the sublime to the simply beautiful: Thus happily expressed in the Septuagint translation.

1. Βρέθεις γάρ γεννηθεὶς γυναικός, ἀληγόβιος, καὶ πλήρες ἀργεῖς.
2. Ἡ ἀστερίας ἄνδρος ἀνθίσας ἔσταισιν, ἀπέδρει διὰ ἀστερὸς σκιά, καὶ ἡ μῆτρα τοῦ.
7. Ἔστι γάρ δύναμης λίτης, ἵνα γάρ ἀποστρέψῃ, τὸν ἀστερόν, καὶ ἡ γεννητος αὐτῷ ὁν μὴ διαλύσῃ.
8. Ἐστι γάρ γενετὴ τοῦ ἡ μῆτρα αὐτοῦ, τὸ δὲ πίτηρος τιλανθίσης τὸ σύντομον αὐτῷ,
9. Ἀπὸ δὲ σπερμάτου ὑπάλειπεν, διατίστη, παντός δὲ θερμότητος, ἀποτελεῖται.
10. Ἀπέγειρε δὲ τακτούλημας ὄχυρο, παντὸς δὲ θερμότητος ἡνὶ διετελεῖ.

1. Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.
2. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he flourisheth also as a shadow, and continueth not.
7. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.
8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground:
9. Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and will bring forth boughs like a plant.
10. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

4. The foregoing examples exhibit a species of composition, which uniting just and natural sentiments with simplicity of expression, preserves at the same time a considerable portion of elevation and dignity. But there is another species of composition, which, possessing the same union of natural sentiments with simplicity of expression, is essentially distinguished from the former, by its always partaking in a considerable degree of comic humour. This is that kind of writing which the French characterise by the term *naïf*, and for which we have no perfectly corresponding expression in English. "Le naïf," says Fontenelle, "est une *naïssance du bas* \*."

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\* Marmontel disputes this opinion, and holds that there may be a *naïveté noble*, of which he gives an example in the scene between Joas and Athalie: "Joas. Quel pere je quitterois! et pour. . . . . Ath. Eh bien? Joas. Pour quelle mere!" This may be termed a *noble ingenuity*; but it has too much grandeur to come under the description of *naïveté*. Voltaire likewise is of opinion that there may be a *naïveté* without any mixture of *lowness*; and gives an example from his own writings, which, perhaps, will not generally be thought a very happy one. In a letter to M. D'Ar-

IN the following fable of Phædrus, there is a *naïveté*, which I think it is scarcely possible to transfuse into any translation :

*Inops potentem dum vult imitari, perit.*

In prato quædam rana conspexit bovem ;  
 Et, tacta invidiâ tantæ magnitudinis,  
 Rugosam inflavit pellem ; tum natos suos  
 Interrogavit, *an bove esset latior.*  
 Illi negarunt. Rursus intendit cutem

gental, in allusion to the character of *Sanchette*, in his comedy of *La Princesse de Navarre*, he says, “ Comment avez “ vous pu jamais imaginer que le *bas* pût se glisser dans ce “ rôle ? Comment est-ce que la naïveté d'une jeune personne “ ignorante, et à qui le nom seul de la cour tourne la tête, “ peut tomber dans le *bas* ? ne voulez vous pas distinguer le “ *bas* du familier, et le naïf de l'un et de l'autre ? ” These remarks are in this instance at least, misapplied ; and are evidently the fruit of an author's partiality for his own compositions. The character which he is thus endeavouring to vindicate, will probably appear faulty to every reader of taste, in respect of its lowness and absurdity. Should we desire an example of the true *naïf* with the least possible intermixture of the *low*, we have it in the admirably drawn character of *Emily Jarvis* in Richardson's *Sir Charles Gran-dison*.

Majore nisu, et simili quæavit modo  
Quis major esset? Ilii dixerunt, bovem.  
Novissimè indignata, dum vult validus  
Inflare aese, rupto jacuit corpore.

It would be extremely difficult to attain, in any translation, the laconic brevity with which this story is told. There is not a single word which can be termed superfluous; yet there is nothing wanting to complete the effect of the picture. The gravity, likewise, of the narrative, when applied to describe an action of the most consummate absurdity; the self-important, but anxious questions, and the mortifying dryness of the answers, furnish an example of a delicate species of humour, which cannot easily be conveyed by corresponding terms in another language. La Fontaine was better qualified than any other for this attempt. He saw the merits of the original, and has endeavoured to rival them; but even La Fontaine has failed:

Une Grenouille vit un boeuf  
Qui lui sembla de belle taille.

Elle, qui n'étoit pas grosse en tout comme un oeuf,  
 Envieuse s'étend, et s'enfle, et se travaille,  
 Pour égaler l'animal en grosseur ;  
 Disant, Regardez bien ma soeur,  
 Est-ce assez, dites moi, n'y suis-je pas encore ?  
 Nenni. M'y voilà donc ? Point du tout. M'y voilà ?  
 Vous n'en approchez point. La chetive pecore  
 S'enfia si bien qu'elle creva.

Le monde est plein de gens qui ne sont pas plus sages :  
 Tout bourgeois veut batir comme les grands seigneurs ;  
 Tout prince a des ambaasadeurs,  
 Tout marquis veut avoir des pages.

BUT La Fontaine himself, when original, may equally defy the powers of a translator. The source of that *naiveté*, which is the characteristic of his fables, has been ingeniously developed by Marmontel : " Ce n'est " pas un poète qui imagine, ce n'est pas un " conteur qui plaisante ; c'est un témoin " présent à l'action, et qui veut vous rendre " présent vous-même. Il met tout en " oeuvre de la meilleure foi du monde pour " vous persuader ; et ce sont tous ces efforts, " c'est le sérieux avec lequel il mêle les plus " grandes choses avec les plus petites ; " c'est l'importance qu'il attache à des

“ jeux d’enfans ; c’est l’intérêt qu’il prend  
“ pour un lapin et une belette, qui font  
“ qu’on est tenté de s’écrier à chaque in-  
“ stant, *Le bon homme !* On le disoit de lui  
“ dans la société. Son caractere n’a fait  
“ que passer dans ses fables. C’est du fond  
“ de ce caractere que sont émanés ces tours  
“ si naturels, ces expressions si naïves, ces  
“ images si fideles.”

It would seem almost impossible to do justice in a translation to the natural and easy humour which characterises the dialogue in the following fable :

*Les Animaux malades de la Peste.*

Un mal qui répand la terreur,  
Mal que le ciel en sa fureur  
Inventa pour punir les crimes de la terre,  
La Peste; (puis qu’il faut l’appeler par son nom),  
Capable d’enrichir en un jour l’Achéron,  
Faisoit aux animaux la guerre.  
Ils ne mourroient pas tous, mais tous étoient frappés.

On n'en voyoit point d'occupés  
A chercher le soutien d'une mourante vie ;  
Nul mets n'exciteoit leur envie.  
Ni loups ni regards n'épient  
La douce et l'innocente proye.  
Les tourterelles se fuyoient ;  
Plus d'amour, partant plus de joye.  
Le Lion tint conseil, et dit, Mes chers amis,  
Je crois que le ciel a permis  
Pour nos péchés cette infortune :  
Que le plus coupable de nous  
Se sacrifice aux traits du celeste courroux ;  
Peut-être il obtiendra la guérison commune.  
L'histoire nous apprend qu'en de tels accidens,  
On fait de pareils dévotemens :  
Ne nous flattons donc point, voyons sans indulgence  
L'état de notre conscience.  
Pour moi, satisfaisant mes appetits gloutons  
J'ai devoré force moutons ;  
Que m'avoient-ils fait ? Nulle offense :  
Même il m'est arrivé quelquefois de manger le Berger.  
Je me dévoûrai donc, s'ils le faut ; mais je pense  
Qu'il est bon que chacun s'accuse ainsi que moi ;  
Car on doit souhaiter, selon toute justice,  
Que le plus coupable périsse.  
Sire, dit le Renard, vous êtes trop bon roi ;  
Vos scrupules font voir trop de délicatesse ;  
Et bien, manger moutons, canaille, sotte espece,

Est-ce un péché ? Non, non : Vous leur fites, seigneur,  
En les croquant beaucoup d'honneur :  
Et quant au Berger, l'on peut dire  
Qu'il étoit digne de tous maux,  
Etant de ces gens-là qui sur les animaux  
Se font un chimérique empire.  
Ansi dit le Renard, et flatteurs d'applaudir.  
On n'osa trop approfondir  
Du Tigre, ni de l'Ours, ni des autres puissances  
Les moins pardonnables offenses.  
Tous les gens querelleurs, jusqu'aux simple matins  
Au dire de chacun, étoient de petits saints.  
L'âne vint à son tour, et dit, J'ai souvenance  
Qu'en un pré de moines passant,  
La faim, l'occasion, l'herbe tendre, et je pense  
Quelque diable aussi me poussant,  
Je tondis de ce pré la largeur de ma langue :  
Je n'en avois nul droit ; puisqu'il faut parler net.  
À ces mots on tria haro sur le baudet :  
Un Loup quelque peu clerc prouva par sa harangue  
Qu'il falloit dévoûer ce maudit animal,  
Ce pelé, ce galeux, d'où venoit tout leur mal.  
Sa peccadille fut jugée un cas pendable ;  
Manger l'herbe d'autrui, quel crime abominable !  
Rien que la mort n'étoit capable  
D'expier son forfait, on le lui fit bien voir.  
Selon que vous aerez puissant ou misérable,  
Les jugemens de cour vous rendront blanc ou noir.

THE French critics have ranked La Fontaine among those authors whom it is impossible to translate. An ingenious writer, Mr Thiébault, thus assigns the reason :  
“ Le mérite de ce poète est trop intimement fondé dans le génie et toutes les délicatesses de notre langue, pour que des étrangers puissent le bien sentir. La Fontaine est donc celui de nos poètes, envers lequel on est le plus injuste hors de France, par la même raison qui ne nous permet d'en parler que dans les termes de la plus vive admiration. C'est encore pour la même raison que je le place à la tête de tous les auteurs qui sont essentiellement intraduisibles. Par tout il découvre et saisit l'expression et le tour qui semblent faits pour l'objet et pour la nuance de sentiment qu'il veut rendre. La Fontaine est le plus Français de tous nos écrivains \*.”

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\* Souvenirs de 20 ans à Berlin, par THIEBAULT, vol. i.  
p. 162;

DESBILLONS, an author of very high merit among the modern Latin poets, who rivals, in his *Fabulæ Æsopiæ*, the *naïveté* of Phædrus, and who unites to that quality an elegance, tenderness; and even dignity of composition, together with the purest Latinity\*, has adopted many of the fables of La Fontaine; but judiciously limiting himself to an imitation of the manner of his original he never attempts to discharge the duty of a translator. If we compare his *Belluæ pestilentia laborantes*, with its original, *Les animaux malades de la peste*, (above inserted), we shall have a just idea of perfect imitation, as distinguished from poetical translation †.

Of a similar character for perfect *naïveté*, is an exquisite fable, entitled *Asinus Judex*,

Y 4

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\* In justification of this praise, the reader is referred to the Fable, entitled *Philomela, Corvus et Bubo*, at No. 4. of the Appendix.

† See Appendix, No. 5.

which Menage has inserted with just encomium in his *Anti-Baillet*; and which I am persuaded every reader of taste will forgive me for here introducing:

*Asinus Judex.*

*Fabula Commerii. (Pere Commeire.)*

Animalia inter orta cum contentio  
 Magna esset olim, sedet asinus arbiter:  
 Quippe aurum mensura liberalior,  
 Et ore toto fusa simplicitas, probi  
 Atque patientis judicis spem fecerant.  
 Primum ad tribunal se novum sistant apes,  
 Direpta questae mellia furorum dolo,  
 Cellasque inanes. Innocentes ille apes  
 Voce altiore, ceu nocentes, increpat:  
 Fucosque labis integros pronunciaps,  
 Dat habere ceras, et favis apum frui.  
 Clangore post haec anser obstrepens gravi,  
 Dato libello supplice, orat ut sibi  
 Sociisque liceat flumina, et lacus sacros.  
 Cignis repulsa, colere. Prasses annuit,  
 Ecce Philomelen Gracculus lacesse,  
 Et vocis audax poscere sibi gloriam.  
 Litem, inquit, asini finiat sententia.  
 Jubentur ambo canere. Luscinia incipit,

Animosque teneris omnium ac sensus modis  
Demulcet. Ipse carmine inflexus caput,  
Et lenta motant brachia in numerum ilices.  
Nec quicquam. Ineptis plus probatur auribus,  
Rude murmur atque stridor absurdus alitis.  
Quid multa? fortē vicit, illo judice,  
Columbus aquilam. Pulchrior picto fuit  
Pavone corvus: ovis lupo voracior.  
Vulpes, iniqua scita sibilantibus,  
Aliud ab illo nil, ait, speraveram,  
Cujus palato carduus gratum sapit.

THERE are here many strokes of the true *naïveté*, which is the characteristic of a good fable, and of which *Phædrus* is the perfect model. The 3d, 4th and 5th lines are peculiarly happy. The judge never hears more than one side, and instantly decides in a high tone of confident absurdity. The Goose demands exclusive possession of the waters, and the expulsion of the Swans; *Præses annuit*. The Bees complain that the Drones consume the fruit of their labour. The Judge instantly condemns the Bees to banishment, and decrees full possession

of the hives and combs to the Drones.  
The Fox draws the moral very happily :

*Aliud ab illo nil, ait, speraveram,  
Cujus palato carduus gratum sapit.*

What powers must the writer possess who is capable of doing full justice to this exquisite morsel in any translation !

5. No compositions will be found more difficult to be translated, than those descriptions, in which a series of minute distinctions are marked by characteristic terms, each peculiarly appropriated to the thing to be designed, but many of them so nearly synonymous, or so approaching to each other, as to be clearly understood only by those who possess the most critical knowledge of the language of the original, and a very competent skill in the subject treated of. I have always regarded Strada's contest of the Musician and Nightingale, as a composition which almost bids defiance to the art of a translator. The reader will easily perceive the extreme difficulty of giving the

full, distinct, and appropriate meaning of those expressions marked in Italics.

Jam Sol a medio pronus deflexerat orbe,  
 Mitius e radiis vibrans crinalibus ignem :  
 Cum fidicen propter Tiberina fluenta, sonant  
 Lenibat plectro curas, aetumque levabat,  
 Illic defensus nigra, scenaque virenti.  
 Audit hunc hospes sylvæ philomela propinquæ,  
 Musa loci, nemoris Siren, inoxia Siren ;  
 Et prope succedens stetit abdita frondibus, altè  
 Accipiens sonitum, secumque remurmurat, et quos  
 Ille modos variat digitis, hæc gutture reddit.

Sensit se fidicen philomela imitante referri,  
 Et placuit tundum volucri dare ; plenius ergo  
 Explorat citharam, tentamentumque futuræ  
 Præbeat ut pugnæ, percurrit protinus omnes  
 Impulsu pernice fides. Nec segnus illa  
 Mille per excurrens variae discrimina vocis,  
 Venturi specimen præfert argutula cantus.

Tunc fidicen per fila movens trepidantia dextram,  
 Nunc contemnenti similis diverberat ungue,  
*Depectitque pari chordas et simplice ductu :*  
 Nunc carpim replicat, digitisque micantibus urget,  
*Fila minutatim, celerique repercutit iocu.*  
 Mox silet. Illa modis totidem respondet, et artem

*Arte refert. Nunc, ceu ruditus aut incerta canendi,  
 Projicit in longum nulloque plicatile flexu,  
 Carmen init simili serie, jugique tenore  
 Præbet iter liquidum labenti e pectore voci :  
 Nunc cæsim variat, modulisque canora minutis  
 Delibrat vocem, tremuloque reciprocat ore.*

*Miratur fidicen parvis è faucibus ire  
 Tam varium, tam dulce melos: majoraque tentans,  
 Alternat mira arte fides; dum torquet acutas  
 Inciditque, graves operoso verbere pulseat,  
 Per miscetque simul certantia rauca sonoris ;  
 Ceu resides in bella viros clangore lassessat.  
 Hoc etiam philomela canit: dumque ore liquenti  
 Vibrat acuta sonum, modulisque interplicat æquis ;  
 Ex inopinato gravis intonat, et leve murmur  
 Turbinat introrsus, alternantique sonore,  
 Clarat et infuscat, ceu martia classica pulset.*

*Scilicet erubuit fidicen, irâque calente,  
 Aut non hoc, inquit, referes, citharistia sylvæ,  
 Aut fractâ cedam citharâ. Nec plura locutus,  
 Non imitabilibus plectrum concentibus urget.  
 Namque manu per fila volat, simul hos, simul illos  
 Explorat numeros, chordâque laborat in omni ;  
 Et strepit et tinnit, crescitque superbius, et se  
 Multiplicat rolegens, plenoque chorcimante plaudit.  
 Tum stetit expectans si quid paret sensula contra.*

Illa autem, quanquam vox dudum exercita fauces  
Asperat, impatiens vinci, simul advocat omnes  
Nec quicquam vires: nam dum discrimina tanta  
Reddere tot fidium nativâ et simplice tentat  
Voce, canaliculisque imitari grandia parvis,  
Impar magnanimitis ausis, imparque dolori,  
Deficit, et vitam summo in certamine linquens,  
Victoris cadit in plectrum, par nacta sepulchrum.

He that should attempt a translation of this most artful composition, *dum tentat discrimina tanta reddere*, would probably, like the nightingale, find himself *impar magnanimitis ausis* \*.

It must be here remarked, that Strada

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\* The attempt, however, has been made. Without mentioning the miserable imitation by Ambrose Philips in his fifth Eclogue, there is, in a little volume, entitled *Produsions Poëticoe*, by the Reverend T. Bancroft, printed at Chester 1788, a version of the *Fidicinis et Philomelæ certamen*, which will please every reader of taste, who forbears to compare it with the original; and in the Poems of Paterson, the ingenious author of the Epistle of *Abelard to Eloisa*, is a fable, entitled, *The Nightingale and Shepherd*, imitated from Strada. But these performances serve only to convince us, that a perfect translation of that composition is a thing almost impossible.

has not the merit of originality in this characteristic description of the song of the Nightingale. He found it in Pliny, and with still greater amplitude, and variety of discrimination. He seems even to have taken from that author the hint of his fable :

“ *Digna miratu avis. Primùm, tanta vox tam parvo in corpusculo, tam pertinax spiritus. Deinde in una perfecta musicæ scientia modulatus editur sonus ; et nunc continuo spiritu trahitur in longum, nunc variatur inflexo, nunc distinguitur conciso, copulatur intorto, promittitur revocatio, infuscatur ex inopinato : interdum et secum ipse murmurat, plenus, gravis, acutus, creber, extensus ; ubi visum est vi brans, summus, mediis, imus. Breviterque omnia tam parvulis in faucibus, quæ tot exquisitis tibiarum tormentis ars hominum excogitavit.—Certant inter se, palamque animosa contentio est. Victa morte finit sæpe vitam, spiritu prius deficiente quam cantu.* ” *PLIN. Nat. Hist. lib. 10. c. 29.*

It would perhaps be as difficult to give a perfect translation of this passage from Pliny, as of the fable of Strada. The attempt, however, has been made by an old English author, Philemon Holland ; and it is curious to remark the extraordinary shifts to which he has been reduced in the search of corresponding expressions :

*Explorat numeros, chordique laborat in omni.*

“ SURELY this bird is not to be set in the  
“ last place of those that deserve admira-  
“ tion : for is it not a wonder, that so loud  
“ and clear a voice should come from so  
“ little a body ? Is it not as strange, that  
“ shee should hold her wind so long, and  
“ continue with it as shee doth ? More-  
“ over, shee alone in her song keepeth time  
“ and measure truly, shee riseth and falleth  
“ in her note just with the rules of music,  
“ and perfect harmony ; for one while, in  
“ one entire breath she draws out her tune  
“ at length treatable ; another while she  
“ quavereth, and goeth away as fast in her  
“ running points : sometimes shee maketh

“ stops and short cuts in her notes ; another time she gathereth in her wind, and singeth descant between the plain song : she fetcheth in her breath again, and then you shall have her in her catches and diversions : anon, all on a sudden, before a man would think it, she drowneth her voice that one can scarce hear her ; now and then she seemeth to record to herself, and then she breaketh out to sing voluntarie. In sum, she varieth and altereth her voice to all keies : one while full of her largs, longs, briefs, semibriefs, and minims ; another while in her crotchetts, quavers, semiquavers, and double semiquavers : for at one time you shall hear her voice full of loud, another time as low ; and anon shrill and on high ; thick and short when she list ; drawn out at leisure again when she is disposed ; and then, (if she be so pleased), shee riseth and mounteth up aloft, as it were with a wind organ. Thus she altereth from one to another, and sings all parts, the treble, the mean, and the base. To conclude, there is not a pipe or instrument devised

“ with all the art and cunning of man, that  
“ can affoord more musick than this pretty  
“ bird doth out of that little throat of hers.  
“ —They strive who can do best, and one  
“ laboureth to excel another in variety of  
“ song and long continuance ; yea, and evi-  
“ dent it is that they contend in good ear-  
“ nest with all their will and power : for  
“ oftentimes she that hath the worse, and is  
“ not able to hold out with another, dieth  
“ for it, and sooner giveth she up her vital  
“ breath than giveth over her song.”

THE consideration of the above passage  
in the original, leads to the following re-  
mark.

5. THERE is no species of writing so dif-  
ficult to be translated, as that where the  
character of the style is florid, and the ex-  
pression consequently vague, and of inde-  
finite meaning. The Natural History of  
Pliny furnishes innumerable examples of  
this fault ; (the worst that can occur in a  
history of art and science, to which a per-  
spicuous diction is most essential) : and

hence that work will ever be found one of the most difficult to be translated. A short chapter shall be here analized, as an instructive specimen.

*Lib. 11. Cap. 2.*

IN magnis siquidem corporibus, aut certe majoribus, facilis officina sequaci materia fuit. In his tam parvis atque tam nullis, quæ ratio, quanta vis, quam inextricabilis perfectio! Ubi tot sensus collocavit in culice? Et sunt alia dictu minora. Sed ubi yisum in eo prætendit? Ubi gustatum applicavit? Ubi odoratum inseruit? Ubi vero truculentam illam et portione maximam vocem ingeneravit? Qua subtilitate pendas adnexuit? Prælongavit pedum crura? dispositus jejunam caveam, uti alvum? Avidam sanguinis et potissimum humani sitim accedit? Telum vero perfodiendo tergori, quo spiculavit ingenio? Atque ut in capaci, cum cerni non possit exilitas, ita reciproca geminavit arte, ut fodiendo acuminatam, pariter sorbendoque fistulosum

esset. Quos teredini ad perforanda robora cum sono teste dentes affixit? Potissimumque e ligno cibatum fecit? Sed turrigeros elephantorum miramur humeros, taurorumque colla, et truces in sublime jactus, tigrium rapinas, leonum jubas; cum rerum natura nusquam magis quam in minimis tota sit. Quapropter quæso, ne hæc legentes, quoniam ex his spernunt multa, etiam relata fastidio damnent, cum in contemplatione naturæ, nihil possit videri supervacuum.

ALTHOUGH, after the perusal of the whole of this chapter, we are at no loss to understand its general meaning; yet when it is taken to pieces, we shall find it extremely difficult to give a precise interpretation, much less an elegant translation of its single sentences. The latter indeed may be accounted impossible, without the exercise of such liberties as will render the version rather a paraphrase than a translation. *In magnis siquidem corporibus, aut certe majoribus, facilis officina sequaci materie fuit.* The sense of the term *magnus*, which is in

itself indefinite, becomes in this sentence much more so, from its opposition to *major*; and the reader is quite at a loss to know, whether in those two classes of animals, the *magni* and the *majores*, the largest animals are signified by the former term, or by the latter. Had the opposition been between *magnus* and *maximus*, or *major* and *maximus*, there could not have been the smallest ambiguity. *Facilis officina sequaci materia fuit*. *Officina* is the workhouse where an artist exercises his craft; but no author, except Pliny himself, ever employed it to signify the labour of the artist. With a similar incorrectness of expression, which, however, is justified by general use, the French employ *cuisine* to signify both the place where victuals are dressed, and the art of dressing them. *Sequax materia* signifies pliable materials, and therefore easily wrought; but the term *sequax* cannot be applied with any propriety to such materials as are easily wrought, on account of their magnitude or abundance. *Tam parvis* is easily understood, but *tam nullis* has either no meaning at all, or a very obscure

one. *Inextricabilis perfectio*. It is no perfection in any thing to be inextricable; for the meaning of inextricable is, embroiled, perplexed, and confounded. *Ubi tot sensus collocavit in culice?* What is the meaning of the question *ubi?* Does it mean, in what part of the body of the gnat? I conceive it can mean nothing else: And if so, the question is absurd; for all the senses of a gnat are not placed in any *one* part of its body, any more than the senses of a man.

*Dictu minora.* By these words the author intended to convey the meaning of *alia etiam minora possunt dici*; but the meaning which he has actually conveyed is, *Sunt alia minora quam quæ dici possunt*, which is false and hyperbolical; for no insect is so small that words may not be found to convey an idea of its size. *Portione maximum vocem ingeneravit.* What is *portione maximam*? It is only from the context that we guess the author's meaning to be, *maximam ratione portionis*, i. e. *magnitudinis insecti*; for neither use, nor the analogy of the language, justify such an expression as *vocem maximam portione*. If it is alleged, that

*portio* is here used to signify the power or intensity of the voice, and is synonymous in this place to *vis*, *magya*, we may safely assert, that this use of the term is licentious, improper, and unwarranted by custom. *Jejunam caveam uti alvum*; “a hungry cavity “for a belly:” but is not the stomach of all animals a hungry cavity, as well as that of the gnat? *Capaci cum cernere non potest exilitas*. *Capax* is improperly contrasted with *exilis*, and cannot be otherwise translated than in the sense of *magnus*. *Reciproca geminavit arte* is incapable of any translation which shall render the proper sense of the words, “doubled with reciprocal art.” The author’s meaning is, fitted “for a double function.” *Cum sono teste* is guessed from the context to mean, *uti sonus testatur*. *Cum rerum natura nusquam magis quam in minimis tota sit*. This is a very obscure expression of a plain sentiment, “The wisdom and power of Nature, “or of Providence, is never more conspiracious than in the smallest bodies.” *Ex his spernunt multa*. The meaning of *ex his* is indefinite, and therefore obscure: we can

but conjecture that it means *ex rebus hujusmodi*; and not *ex his quæ diximus*; for that sense is reserved for *relata*.

From this specimen, we may judge of the difficulty of giving a *just translation* of Pliny's Natural History; a work of which, from the vast store of valuable knowledge it contains, it is much to be regretted the learned author has greatly diminished the utility, by a studied obscurity and false refinement of expression.



## CHAPTER XIV.

*Of Burlesque Translation.—Travesty and Parody.—Scarron's Virgile Travesti—Another Species of Ludicrous Translation.*

**I**N a preceding chapter, while treating of the translation of idiomatic phrases, we censured the use of such idioms in the translation as do not correspond with the age or country of the original. There is, however, one species of translation, in which that violation of the *costume* is not only blameless, but seems essential to the nature of the composition: I mean burlesque translation, or Travesty. This species of writing partakes, in a great degree, of original composition; and is therefore not to be measured by the laws of serious translation. It conveys neither a just picture of the sentiments, nor a

faithful representation of the style and manner of the original ; but pleases itself in exhibiting a ludicrous caricatura of both. It displays an overcharged and grotesque resemblance, and excites our risible emotions by the incongruous association of dignity and meanness, wisdom and absurdity. This association forms equally the basis of Travesty and of Ludicrous Parody, from which it is no otherwise distinguished than by its assuming a different language from the original. In order that the mimickry may be understood, it is necessary that the writer choose, for the exercise of his talents, a work that is well known, and of great reputation. Whether that reputation is deserved or unjust, the work may be equally the subject of burlesque imitation. If it has been the subject of general, but undeserved praise, a Parody or a Travesty is then a fair satire on the false taste of the original author, and his admirers, and we are pleased to see both become the objects of a just censure. The *Rehearsal*, *Tom Thumb*, and *Crononhotonthologos*, which exhibit ludicrous parodies of passages from the favourite dra-

matic writers of the times, convey a great deal of just and useful criticism. If the original is a work of real excellence, the Travesty or Parody detracts nothing from its merit, nor robs the author of the smallest portion of his merited praise \*. We laugh at the association of dignity and meanness; but the former remains the exclusive property of the original, the latter belongs solely to the copy. We give due praise to the mimical powers of the imitator, and are delighted to see how ingeniously he can elicit subject of mirth and ridicule from what is grave, dignified, pathetic, or sublime.

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\* The occasional blemishes, however, of a good writer, are a fair subject of castigation; and a travesty or burlesque parody of them will please, from the justness of the satire: As the following ludicrous version of a passage in the 5th *Aeneid*, which is among the few examples of false taste in the chancery of the Latin Poets:

— *Oculos telumque tetendit.*

— He cock'd his eye and gun.

IN the description of the games in the 5th *Aeneid*, Virgil every where supports the dignity of the Epic narration. His persons are heroes, their actions are suitable to that character, and we feel our passions seriously interested in the issue of the several contests. The same scenes travestied by Scarron are ludicrous in the extreme. His heroes have the same names, they are engaged in the same actions, they have even a grotesque resemblance in character to their prototypes ; but they have all the meanness, rudeness, and vulgarity of ordinary prize-fighters, hackney coachmen, horse-jockeys, and watermen.

— *Medio Gyas in gurgite vitor  
Rectorem navis compellat voce Menatem ;  
Quo tantum mihi dexter abis ? huc dirige cursum,  
Littus ama, et laevas stringat sine palmula cautes ;  
Altum alii teneant. Dixit : sed caca Menates  
Saxa timens, proram pelagi detorquet ad undas.  
Quo diversus abis ? iterum pete saxe Menete,  
Cum clamore Gyas revocabat.* —

Gyas, qui croit que son pilote,  
Comme un vieil fou qu'il est, radote,

De ce qu'en mer il s'elargit,  
 Aussi fort qu'un lion rugit ;  
 Et s'ecrie, écumant de rage,  
 Serre, serre donc le rivage,  
 Fils de putain de Ménéthu,  
 Serre, ou bien nous somme victus :  
 Serre donc, serre à la pareille :  
 Ménéthu fit la sourde oreille,  
 Et s'éloigne toujours du bord,  
 Et si pourtant il n'a pas tort :  
 Habile qu'il est, il redoute  
 Certains rocs, ou l'on ne voit goutte—  
 Lors Gyas se met en furie,  
 Et de rechef crie et recrie,  
 Vieil coyon, pilote enragé,  
 Mes ennemis t'ont ils gagé  
 Pour m'oter l'honneur de la sorte ?  
 Serre, ou que le diable t'emporte,  
 Serre le bord, ame de chien :  
 Mais au diable, s'il en fait rien.

IN Virgil, the prizes are suitable to the dignity of the persons who contend for them :

Munera principio ante oculos, circoque locantur  
 In medio: sacri tripodes, viridesque coronæ,  
 Et palmae, pretium victoribus; armaque, et ostro  
 Perfusæ vestes, argenti aurique talenta.

IN Scarron, the prizes are accommodated to the contending parties with equal propriety :

Maitre Eneas faisant le sage, &c.  
Fit apporter une marmitte,  
C'etoit un des prix destinés ;  
Deux pourpoints fort bien galonnés,  
Moitié filet et moitié soye ;  
Un sifflet contrefaisant l'oye ;  
Un engin pour casser des noix ;  
Vingt et quatre assiettes de bois,  
Qu' Eneas allant au fourrage  
Avoit trouvé dans le baggage  
Du vénérable Agamemnon :  
Certain auteur a dit qu'e nom,  
Comptant la chose d'autre sorte,  
Mais ici fort peu nous importe :  
Une toque de velous gras ;  
Un engin à prendre des rats,  
Ouvrage du grand Aristandre,  
Qui savoit bien les rats prendre  
En plus de cinquante façons,  
Et même en donnoit des leçons :  
Deux tasses d'etain émaillées ;  
Deux pantoufles despareillées,  
Dont l'une fut au grand Hector,  
Toutes deux de peau de castor——  
Et plusieurs autres nippes rares, &c.

BUT this species of composition pleases only in a short specimen. We cannot bear a lengthened work in Travesty. The incongruous association of dignity and meanness excites risibility chiefly from its being unexpected. Even the best of these compositions, Cotton's and Scarron's Virgil, entertain but for a few pages : the composition soon becomes tedious, and at length disgusting. We laugh at a short exhibition of buffoonry ; but we cannot endure a man, who, with good talents, is constantly playing the fool.

THERE is a species of ludicrous verse translation which is not of the nature of Travesty, and which seems to be regulated by all the laws of serious translation. It is employed upon a ludicrous original, and its purpose is not to burlesque, but to represent it with the utmost fidelity. For that purpose, even the metrical stanza is closely imitated. The ludicrous effect is heightened, when the stanza is peculiar in its structure, and is transferred from a modern to an

ancient language ; as in Dr Aldrich's translation of the well-known song,

A soldier and a sailor,  
A tinker and a tailor,  
Once had a doubtful strife, Sir,  
To make a maid a wife, Sir,  
Whose name was buxom Joan, &c.

*Miles et navigator,*  
*Sartor et aerator,*  
*Jamdudum litigabant,*  
*De pulchra quam amabant,*  
*Nomen cui est Joanna, &c.*

Of the same species of translation is the facetious composition entitled *Ebrii Barnabæ Itinerarium*, or Drunken Barnaby's Journal :

*O Faustule, dic amico,*  
*Quo in loco, quo in vico,*  
*Sive campo, sive tecto,*  
*Sine linteo, sine lecto ;*  
*Propinasti queis tabernis,*  
*An in terris, an Avernus.*

Little Fausty, tell thy true heart,  
In what region, coast, or new part,  
Field or fold, thou hast been bousing,  
Without linen, bedding, housing ;  
In what tavern, pray thee, show us,  
Here on earth, or else below us.

And the whimsical, though serious, translation of Chevy-chace :

*Vivat Rea noster nobilis,*  
*Omnis in tuto sit ;*  
*Venatus olim flebilis*  
*Chevino luco fit.*

God prosper long our noble King,  
Our lives and safeties all :  
A woful hunting once there did  
In Chevy-chace befal \*, &c.

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\* Of a similar character with the foregoing are some late specimens of burlesque Latin translation in rhyme, viz. Ramsay's Tale of *The Monk and the Miller's Wife*, the old ballad of *The Wife of Auchtermuchty*, &c. printed in *Carmina rario-  
ra Macaronica*, Edin. 1803.



## CHAPTER XV.

*The Genius of the Translator should be akin to that of the Original Author.—The best Translators have shone in Original Composition of the same Species with that which they have translated.—Of Voltaire's Translations from Shakespeare.—Of the Peculiar Character of the Wit of Voltaire.—His Translation from Hudibras.—Excellent Anonymous French Translation of Hudibras.—Translation of Rabelais by Urquhart and Motteux.*

From the consideration of those general rules of translation which in the foregoing chapters I have endeavoured to illustrate, it will appear no unnatural conclusion to as-

sert, that he only is perfectly accomplished for the duty of a translator who possesses a genius akin to that of the original author. I do not mean to carry this proposition so far as to affirm, that in order to give a perfect translation of the works of Cicero, a man must actually be as great an orator, or inherit the same extent of philosophical genius ; but he must have a mind capable of discerning the full merits of his original, of attending with an acute perception to the whole of his reasoning, and of entering with warmth and energy of feeling into all the beauties of his composition. Thus we shall observe invariably, that the best translators have been those writers who have composed original works of the same species with those which they have translated. The mutilated version which yet remains to us of the Timæus of Plato translated by Cicero, is a masterly composition, which, in the opinion of the best judges, rivals the merit of the original. A similar commendation cannot be bestowed on those fragments of the Phænomena of Aratus, translated into verse by the same author ; for Cicero's poe-

tical talents were not remarkable ; but who can doubt, that had time spared to us his versions of the *Orations* of Demosthenes and *Æschines*, we should have found them possessed of the most transcendent merit ?

WE have observed, in the preceding part of this *Essay*, that poetical translation is less subjected to restraint than prose translation, and allows more of the freedom of original composition. It will hence follow, that to exercise this freedom with propriety, a translator must have the talent of original composition in poetry ; and therefore, that in this species of translation, the possession of a genius akin to that of his author, is more essentially necessary than in any other. We know the remark of Denham, that the subtle spirit of poesy evaporates entirely in the transfusion from one language into another, and that unless a new, or an original spirit, is infused by the translator himself, there will remain nothing but a *caput mortuum*. The best translators of poetry, therefore, have been those who have approved their talents in original poetical

composition. Dryden, Pope, Addison, Rowe, Tickell, Pitt, Warton, Mason, and Murphy, rank equally high in the list of original poets, as in that of the translators of poetry.

BUT as poetical composition is various in its kind, and the characters of the different species of poetry are extremely distinct, and often opposite in their nature, it is very evident, that the possession of talents adequate to one species of translation, as to one species of original poetry, will not infer the capacity of excelling in other species, of which the character is different. Still further, it may be observed, that as there are certain species of poetical composition, as, for example, the Dramatic, which, though of the same general character in all nations, will take a strong tincture of difference from the manners of a country, or the peculiar genius of a people; so it will be found, that a poet, eminent as an original author in his own country may fail remarkably in attempting to convey, by a translation, an idea of the merits of a foreign work which is tinctured by the national ge-

nius of the country which produced it. Of this we have a striking example in those translations from Shakespeare by Voltaire; in which the French poet, eminent himself in dramatical composition, intended to convey to his countrymen a just idea of our most celebrated author in the same department. But Shakespeare and Voltaire, though perhaps akin to each other in some of the great features of the mind, were widely distinguished, even by nature, in the characters of their poetical genius; and this natural distinction was still more sensibly increased by the general tone of manners, the *hue and fashion* of thought of their respective countries. Voltaire, in his *Essay sur la Tragédie Angloise*, has chosen the famous soliloquy in the tragedy of Hamlet, “*To be, or not to be*,” as one of those striking passages which best exemplify the genius of Shakespeare, and which, in the words of the French author, *demandent grace pour toutes ses fautes*. It may therefore be presumed, that the translator in this instance endeavoured, as far as lay in his power, not only to adopt the spirit of his author, but to re-

present him as favourably as possible to his countrymen. Yet how wonderfully has he metamorphosed, how miserably disfigured him ! In the original, we have the perfect picture of a mind strongly agitated, giving vent to its feelings in broken starts of utterance, and in language which plainly indicates, that the speaker is reasoning solely with his own mind, and not with any auditor. In the translation, we have a formal and connected harangue, in which it would appear, that the author, offended with the abrupt manner of the original, and judging those irregular starts of expression to be unsuitable to that precision which is required in abstract reasoning, has corrected, as he thought, those defects of the original, and given union, strength, and precision, to this philosophical argument.

Demeure, il faut choisir, et passer à l'instant  
De la vie à la mort, ou de l'être au néant.  
Dieux justes, s'il en est, éclairez mon courage.  
Faut-il vieillir courbé sous la main qui m'outrage,  
Supporter, ou finir mon malheur et mon sort !  
Que suis-je ? qui m'arrête ? et qu'est ce que la mort ?

C'est la fin de nos maux, c'est mon unique asile ;  
Apres de longs transports, c'est un sommeil tranquile.  
On s'endort et tout meurt ; mais un affreux reveil,  
Doit succéder peutêtre aux douceurs du sommeil.  
On nous menace ; on dit que cette courte vie  
De tourmens éternels est aussitôt suivie.  
O mort ! moment fatale ! affreuse éternité !  
Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace épouvanté.  
Eh ! qui pourrait sans toi supporter cette vie ?  
De nos prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie ?  
D'une indigne maîtresse encenser les erreurs ?  
Ramper sous un ministre, adorer ses hauteurs ?  
Et montrer les langueurs de son âme abattue,  
A des amis ingrats qui detournent la vue ?  
La mort serait trop douce en ces extrémités.  
Mais le scrupule parle, et nous crie, arrêtez.  
Il défend à nos mains cet heureux homicide,  
Et d'un héros guerrier, fait un Chrétien timide \*.

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\* To be, or not to be, that is the question :  
Whether 'tis better in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ;  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them ? To die ;—to sleep ;  
No more ?—And by a sleep, to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to ;—'tis a consummation

BESIDES, the general fault already noticed, of substituting formal and connected reasoning, to the desultory range of thought and abrupt transitions of the original, Vol-

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Devoutly to be wish'd. To die ;— to sleep ;—  
To sleep ! perchance to dream ;—ay, there's the rub ;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause : There's the respect,  
That makes calamity of so long life :  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels bear,  
To groan and sweat under a weary life ;  
But that the dread of something after death—  
That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne  
No traveller returns—puzzles the will ;  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of ?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all, &c.

*Hamlet, act 3. sc. 1.*

taire has in this passage, by the looseness of his paraphrase, allowed some of the most striking beauties, both of the thought and expression, entirely to escape; while he has superadded, with unpardonable licence, several ideas of his own, not only unconnected with the original, but dissonant to the general tenor of the speaker's thoughts, and foreign to his character. Adopting Voltaire's own style of criticism on the translations of the Abbé des Fontaines, we may ask him, "Where do we find, in this translation of Hamlet's soliloquy,

" The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune—  
" To take arms against a sea of troubles—  
" The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
" That flesh is heir to—  
" Perchance to dream; ay there's the rub—  
" The whips and scorns of time—  
" The law's delay, the insolence of office—  
" The spurns—that patient merit from th' unworthy  
" takes—  
" That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne.  
" No traveller returns"—?

CAN Voltaire, who has omitted in this

short passage all the above striking peculiarities of thought and expression, be said to have given a translation from Shakespeare?

But in return for what he has retrenched from his author, he has made a liberal addition of several new and original ideas of his own. Hamlet, whose character in Shakespeare exhibits the strongest impressions of religion, who feels these impressions even to a degree of superstition, which influences his conduct in the most important exigences, and renders him weak and irresolute, appears in Mr Voltaire's translation a thorough sceptic and freethinker. In the course of a few lines, he expresses his doubt of the existence of a God; he treats the priests as liars and hypocrites, and the Christian religion as a system which debases human nature, and makes a coward of a hero:

Dieux justes! S'il en est—

De nos prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie—

Et d'un héros guerrier, fait un Chrétien timide—

Now, who gave Mr Voltaire a right thus to transmute the pious and superstitious Hamlet into modern *philosophe* and *Esprit fort*? Whether the French author meant by this transmutation to convey to his countrymen a favourable idea of our English bard, we cannot pretend to say; but we may at least affirm, that he has not conveyed a just one \*.

BUT what has prevented the translator, who professes that he wished to give a just

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\* Other ideas superadded by the translator are:

Que suis-je — Qui m' arrête? —

On nous menace, on dit que cette courte vie, &c.

— Affreuse éternité!

Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace épouvanté —

A des amis ingrats qui détournent la vue.

In the *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare*, which is one of the best pieces of criticism in the English language, the reader will find many examples of similar misrepresentation and wilful debasements of our great dramatic poet, in the pretended translations of Voltaire.

idea of the merits of his original, from accomplishing what he wished? Not ignorance of the language; for Voltaire, though no great critic in the English tongue, had yet a competent knowledge of it; and the change he has put upon the reader was not involuntary, or the effect of ignorance. Neither was it the want of genius, or of poetical talents; for Voltaire is certainly one of the best poets, and one of the greatest masters of the drama. But it was the original difference of his genius and that of Shakespeare, increased by the general opposition of the national character of the French and English. His mind, accustomed to connect all ideas of dramatic sublimity or beauty with regular design and perfect symmetry of composition, could not comprehend this union of the great and beautiful with irregularity of structure and partial disproportion. He was capable indeed of discerning some features of majesty in this colossal statue; but the rudeness of the parts, and the want of polish in the whole figure, prevailed over the general impression of its grandeur, and

presented it altogether to his eye as a monstrous production.

THE genius of Voltaire was more akin to that of Dryden, of Waller, of Addison, and of Pope, than to that of Shakespeare : he has, therefore, succeeded much better in the translations he has given of particular passages from these poets, than in those he has attempted from our great master of the drama.

VOLTAIRE possessed a large share of wit ; but it is of a species peculiar to himself, and which, I think, has never yet been analysed. It appears to me to be the result of acute philosophical talents, a strong spirit of satire, and a most brilliant imagination. As all wit consists in unexpected combinations, the singular union of a philosophic thought with a lively fancy, which is a very uncommon association, seems in general to be the basis of the wit of Voltaire. It is of a very different species from that wit which is associated with humour which is exercised in presenting odd, extravagant, but natural

views of human character, and which forms the essence of ludicrous composition. The novels of Voltaire have no other scope than to illustrate certain philosophical doctrines, or to expose certain philosophical errors; they are not pictures of life or of manners; and the persons who figure in them are pure creatures of the imagination, fictitious beings, who have nothing of nature in their composition, and who neither act nor reason like the ordinary race of men. Voltaire, then, with a great deal of wit, seems to have had no talent for humorous composition. Now, if such is the character of his original genius, we may presume, that he was not capable of justly estimating in the compositions of others what he did not possess himself. We may likewise fairly conclude, that he should fail in attempting to convey by a translation a just idea of the merits of a work, of which one of the main ingredients is that quality in which he was himself deficient. Of this I proceed to give give a strong example.

IN the poem of *Hudibras*, we have a remarkable combination of Wit with Humour; nor is it easy to say which of these qualities chiefly predominates in the composition. A proof that humour forms a most capital ingredient is, that the inimitable Hogarth has told the whole story of the poem in a series of characteristic prints: now painting is completely adequate to the representation of humour, but can convey no idea of wit. Of this singular poem, Voltaire has attempted to give a specimen to his countrymen by a translation; but in this experiment he says he has found it necessary to concentrate the first four hundred lines into little more than eighty of the translation \*. The truth is, that, either insensible of that part of the merit of the ori-

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\* "Pour faire connoître l'esprit de ce poème, unique en son genre, il faut retrancher les trois quarts de tout passage qu'on veut traduire; car ce *Butler* ne finit jamais. J'ai donc réduit à environ quatre-vingt vers les quatre cent premiers vers d'*Hudibras*, pour éviter la prolixité." *Mel. Philos. par Voltaire, Oeuv. tom. 15. Ed. de Genève, 4<sup>e</sup>g.*

ginal, or conscious of his own inability to give a just idea of it, he has left out all that constitutes the humour of the painting, and attached himself solely to the wit of the composition. In the original, we have a description of the figure, dress, and accoutrements of Sir Hudibras, which is highly humorous, and which conveys to the imagination as complete a picture as is given by the characteristic etchings of Hogarth. In the translation of Voltaire, all that we learn of those particulars which *paint* the hero, is, that he wore mustachios, and rode with a pair of pistols.

EVEN the wit of the original, in passing through the alembic of Voltaire, has changed in a great measure its nature, and assimilated itself to that which is peculiar to the translator. The wit of Butler is more concentrated, more pointed, and is announced in fewer words, than the wit of Voltaire. The translator, therefore, though he pretends to have abridged four hundred verses into eighty, has in truth effected this by the retranchment of the wit of his original, and

not by the concentration of it : for when we compare any particular passage or point, we find there is more diffusion in the translation than in the original. Thus, Butler says,

The difference was so small, his brain  
Outweigh'd his rage but half a grain ;  
Which made some take him for a tool  
That knaves do work with, call'd a fool.

Thus amplified by Voltaire, and at the same time imperfectly translated :

Mais malgré sa grande eloquence,  
Et son merite, et sa prudence,  
Il passa chez quelques savans  
Pour être un de ces instrumens  
Dont les fripons avec adresse  
Savent user sans dire mot,  
Et qu'ils tournent avec souplesse ;  
Cet instrument s'appelle un *set*.

Thus likewise the famous simile of Talia-  
cotius, loses by the amplification of the trans-  
lator, a great portion of its spirit :

So learned Taliacotus from  
The brawny part of porter's bum  
Cut supplemental noses, which  
Would last as long as parent breech;  
But, when the date of nock was out,  
Off dropt the sympathetic snout.

Ainsi Taliacotus,  
Grand Esculape d'Etrurie,  
Répara tous les nez perdus  
Par une nouvelle industrie :  
Il vous prenoit adroitemment  
Un morceau du cul d'un pauvre homme;  
L'appliquoit au nez proprement;  
Enfin il arrivat qu'en somme,  
Tout juste à la mort du préteur  
Tombait le nez de l'emprunteur;  
Et souvent dans la même bière,  
Par justice et par bon accord,  
On remettait au gré du mort  
Le nez auprès de son derrière.

It will be allowed, that notwithstanding the supplemental witticism of the translator, contained in the last four lines, the simile loses, upon the whole, very greatly by its diffusion. The following anonymous Latin versions of this simile are possessed of much

higher merit, as, with equal brevity of expression, they convey a great deal of the spirit of the original :

*Sic adscitios nasos de clavis torosi  
Vectoris docti secuit Talicotius arte,  
Qui potuere parem durando inquare parentem :  
At postquam fato clavis computravit, ipsum  
Und sympatheticum caput tabesore rostrum.*

THE next has the additional merit of imitating the measure of the original :

*Sic Talicoti art. amica  
Vectoris parte de poetica,  
Falsis invenit carnem nasit,  
Quæ daret tamdiu quam basis ;  
Sed rostrum parili ruisid  
Cum clavis periit concebriat.*

DODSLEY'S MUSEUM, VOL. II.

WITH these translations may be compared the following, which is taken from a complete version of the Poem of Hudibras, a very remarkable work, with the merits of which (as the book is less known than it de-

serves to be), I am glad to have this opportunity of making the English reader acquainted :

Ainsi Talicot d'une feste  
Savoir tailler avec adresse  
Nes tous neufs, qui ne risquoient rien  
Tant que le cul se portoit bien ;  
Mais si le cul perdoit la vie,  
Le nez tomboit par sympathie.

IN one circumstance of this passage no translation can come up to the original : it is in that additional pleasantry which results from the structure of the verses, the first line ending most unexpectedly with a preposition, and the third with a pronoun, both which are the rhyming syllables in the two couplets :

So learned Taliacotius *from*, &c.

Cut supplemental noses; *which*, &c.

It was perhaps impossible to imitate this in a translation ; but setting this circumstance aside, the merit of the latter French version

seems to me to approach very near to that of the original.

The author of this translation of the Poem of Hudibras, evidently a man of superior abilities \*, appears to have been endowed with an uncommon share of modesty. He presents his work to the public with the utmost diffidence ; and in a short preface, humbly deprecates its censure for the presumption that may be imputed to him, in attempting that which the celebrated Voltaire had declared to be one of the most difficult of tasks. Yet this task he has executed in a very masterly manner. A few specimens will shew the high merit of this work, and clearly evince, that the translator possessed that essential

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\* I have lately learnt, that the author of this translation was Colonel Townley, an English gentleman who had been educated in France, and long in the French service, and who thus had acquired a most intimate knowledge of both languages :—The same person (Francis Townley) who suffered death at Carlisle, for his concern in the Rebellion 1745-6 ; and who pleaded in vain this commutation from the French King, as entitling him to the benefit of the cartel settled with France for the exchange of prisoners of war.

requisite for his undertaking, a kindred genius with that of his great original.

THE religion of Hudibras is thus described :

For his religion, it was fit  
To match his learning and his wit :  
'Twas Presbyterian true blue ;  
For he was of that stubborn crew  
Of errant saints, whom all men grant  
To be the true church-militant :  
Such as do build their faith upon  
The holy-text of pike and gun ;  
Decide all controversies by  
Infallible artillery ;  
And prove their doctrine orthodox,  
By apostolic blows and knocks. *Canto 1.*

Sa religion au génie  
Et sçavoir étoit assortie ;  
Il étoit franc Presbyterien,  
Et de sa secte le soutien,  
Secte, qui justement se vante  
D' étre l'Eglise militante ;  
Qui de sa foi vous rend raison  
Par la bouche de son canon,

Dont le boulet et feu terrible  
Montre bien qu'elle est infallible,  
Et sa doctrine prouve à tous  
Orthodoxe, à force de coups.

IN the following passage, the arch rationalization of the original is happily rivalled in the translation :

For Hudibras wore but one spur,  
As wisely knowing could he stir  
To active trot one side of's horse,  
The other would not hang an a—se.

Car Hudibras avec raison  
Ne se chaussoit qu'un éperon,  
Ayant preuve démonstrative  
Qu'un côté marchant, l'autre arrive.

THE language of Sir Hudibras is described as a strange jargon, compounded of English, Greek and Latin,

Which made some think when he did gabble.  
They'd heard three labourers of Babel,  
Or Cerberus himself pronounce  
A leash of languages at once.

It was difficult to do justice in the translation to the metaphor of Cerberus, by translating *leash of languages*: This, however, is very happily effected by a parallel witticism:

Ce qui pouvoit bien faire accroire  
 Quand il parloit à l'auditoire,  
 D'entendre encore le bruit mortel  
 De trois ouvriers de Babel,  
 Ou Cerbère aux ames errantes  
 Japper trois langues différentes.

THE wit of the following passage is completely transfused, perhaps even heightened in the translation:

For he by geometric scale,  
 Could take the size of pots of ale;  
 Resolve by sines and tangents straight  
 If bread or butter wanted weight:  
 And wisely tell what hour o'th' day  
 The clock doth strike, by algebra.

En géometre raffiné  
 Un pot de biere il eut jaugé;

Par tangente et sinus sur l'heure  
Trouvé le poids de pain ou beurre ;  
Et par algebre eut dit aussi  
A quelle heure il sonne midi.

THE last specimen I shall give from this work, is Hudibras's consultation with the lawyer, in which the Knight proposes to prosecute Sidrophel in an action of battery :

Quoth he, there is one Sidrophel  
Whom I have cudgell'd—" Very well."  
And now he brags t'have beaten me.—  
" Better and better still," quoth he.—  
And vows to stick me to the wall  
Where'er he meets me—" Best of all."  
'Tis true, the knave has taken's oath  
That I robb'd him—" Well done, in troth."—  
When h'has confess'd he stole my cloak,  
And pick'd my fob, and what he took,  
Which was the cause that made me hang him  
And take my goods again—" Marry, hang him."  
— " Sir," quoth the lawyer, " not to flatter ye,  
" You have as good and fair a battery  
" As heart can wish, and need not shame  
" The proudest man alive to claim :

" For if they've ts'd you as you say ;  
 " Marry, quoth I, God give you joy :  
 " I would it were my case, I'd give  
 " More than I'll say, or you believe."

Il est, dit-il, de par le monde  
 Un Sidrophel, que Dieu confonde,  
 Que j'ai rossé des mieux.—“ Fort bien”—  
 Et maintenant il dit, le chien,  
 Qu'il m'a battu—“ Bien mieux encore.”  
 Et jure, afin qu'on ne l'ignore,  
 Que s'il me trouve il me tuera—  
 “ Le meilleur de tout le voila”—  
 Il est vrai que ce misérable  
 A fait serment au préalable  
 Que moi je l'ai dévalisé—  
 “ C'est fort bien fait, en vérité”—  
 Tandis que lui-même il confesse,  
 Qu'il m'a volé dans une presse,  
 Mon manteau, mon gouasset vuidé ;  
 Et c'est pourquoi je l'ai rossé :  
 Puis mes effets j'ai su reprendre.”—  
 “ Oui da,” dit-il, “ il faut le pendre.”  
 —Dit l'avocat, “ Sans flatterie  
 “ Vous avez, Monsieur, batterie  
 “ Aussi bonne qu'on puisse avoir ;  
 “ Vous devez vous en prévaloir.

“ S'ils vous ont traité de la sorte,  
“ Comme votre récit le porte,  
“ Je vous en fais mon compliment ;  
“ Je voudrois pour bien de l'argent,  
“ Et plus que vous ne sauriez croire,  
“ Qu'il m'arrivât pareille histoire.”

THESE specimens are sufficient to shew how completely this translator has entered into the spirit of his original, and has thus succeeded in conveying a very perfect idea to his countrymen of one of those works which are most strongly tinctured with the peculiarities of national character, and which therefore required a singular coincidence of the talents of the translator with those of the original author.

IF the English can boast of any parallel to this, in a version from the French, where the translator has given equal proof of a kindred genius to that of his original, and has as successfully accomplished a task of equal difficulty, it is in the translation of *Rabelais*, begun by Sir Thomas Urquhart, and finished by Mr Motteux,

and lastly, revised and corrected by Mr Ozell. The difficulty of translating this work, arises less from its obsolete style, than from a phraseology peculiar to the author, which he seems to have purposely rendered obscure, in order to conceal that satire which he levels both against the civil government and the ecclesiastical policy of his country. Such is the studied obscurity of this satire, that but a very few of the most learned and acute among his own countrymen have professed to understand Rabelais in the original. The history of the English translation of this work, is in itself a proof of its very high merit. The three first books were translated by Sir Thomas Urquhart, but only two of them were published in his lifetime. Mr Motteux, a Frenchman by birth, but whose long residence in England had given him an equal command of both languages, republished the work of Urquhart, and added the remaining three books translated by himself; with a variety of curious notes. In this publication he allows the excellence of the work of his predeces-

for, whom he declares to have been a complete master of the French language, and to have possessed both learning and fancy equal to the task he undertook. He adds, that he has preserved in his translation "the very style and air of his original;" and finally, "that the English readers may now understand that author better in their own tongue, than many of the French can do in theirs." The work thus completed in English, was taken up by Mr Ozell, a person of considerable literary abilities, and who possessed an uncommon knowledge both of the ancient and modern languages. Of the merits of the translation, none could be a better judge, and to these he has given the strongest testimony, by adopting it entirely in his new edition, and limiting his own undertaking solely to the correction of the text of Urquhart and Motteux, with additional notes of his own; to which he has added a translation of the notes of M. Du Chat, who spent, as Mr Ozell informs us, forty years in composing annotations on the original work. The English version of Ra-

belais thus improved, may be considered, in its present form, as one of the most perfect specimens of the art of translation. The best critics in both languages have borne testimony to its faithful transfusion of the sense, and happy imitation of the style of the original\*; and every English reader will acknowledge, that it possesses all the ease of original composition. If I have forborne to illustrate any of the rules or

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\* M. Du Chat's own testimony to the merits of this excellent English version of Rabelais, must render superfluous every other: "Mes remarques sont, ou historiques, ou critiques, et purement de grammaire, suivant le sujet auquel je me suis borné. Ceux qui voudront en voir d'une autre nature, sur le même auteur, lisont avec plaisir la grande préface et les notes Angloises du Rabelais Anglois imprimé depuis xvi. ans à Londres, et ré-imprimées nouvellement. Si personne n'a encore entrepris de traduire en Français ces notes et cette préface, c'est apparemment qu'on est bien persuadé, qu'il n'y a que l'auteur qui puisse s'en bien acquitter. Soit lui, ou un autre qui exécute la chose, il n'y aura point de libraire qui ne trouve son compte à imprimer un tel livre."

*Préface de M. Du Chat.*

or precepts of the preceding Essay from this work, my reasons were, that obscurity I have already noticed, which rendered it less fit for the purpose of such illustration, and that strong tincture of licentiousness which characterises the whole work.

THE END.

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## **APPENDIX.**

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## APPENDIX.

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### NO. I.

STANZAS from TICKELL's Ballad of COLIN and LUCY.

*Translated by LE MIERRE.*

CHERES compagnes, je vous laisse ;  
Une voix semble m'apeller,  
Une main que je vois sans cesse  
Me fait signe de m'en aller.

L'ingrat que j'avois cru sincere  
Me fait mourir, si jeune encor :  
Une plus riche a sçu lui plaire :  
Moi qui l'aimois, voila mon sort !

Ah Colin ! ah ! que vas-tu faire ?  
Rends-moi mon bien, rends-moi ta foi ;

Et toi que son cœur me préfère  
De ses baisers detourne-toi.

Dès le matin én épousée  
A l'église il te conduira ;  
Mais homme faux, fille abusée,  
Songez que Lucy sera là.

Filles, portez-moi vers ma fosse ;  
Que l'ingrat me rencontre alors,  
Lui, dans son bel habit de nôce,  
Et Lucy sous le drap des morts.

*I hear a voice you cannot hear,  
Which says I must not stay,  
I see a hand you cannot see,  
Which beckons me away.*

*By a false heart, and broken vows,  
In early youth I die ;  
Am I to blame, because his bride  
Is thrice as rich as I ?*

*Ah Colin, give not her thy vows,  
Vows due to me alone ;  
Nor thou, fond maid, receive his kiss,  
Nor think him all thy own.*

*To-morrow in the church to wed,  
Impatient both prepare,  
But know, fond maid, and know, false man,  
That Lucy will be there.*

*There bear my corse, ye comrades, bear,  
The bridegroom blithe to meet;  
He in his wedding-trim so gay,  
I in my winding-sheet.*

## NO. II.

## ODE V. of the First Book of HORACE,

*Translated by MILTON.**Quis multa gracilis, &c.*

WHAT slender youth, bedew'd with liquid odours,  
Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave?

Pyrrha, for whom bind'st thou  
In wreaths thy golden hair,

Plain in thy neatness? O how oft shall he  
On faith and changed Gods complain, and seas  
Rough with black winds, and storms  
Unwonted shall admire.

Who now enjoys thee credulous, all gold,  
Who always vacant, always amiable,  
Hopes thee; of flattering gales  
Unmindful? Hapless they

To whom thou untry'd seem'st fair. Me in my vow'd  
Picture the sacred wall declares t' have hung  
My dank and dropping weeds  
To the stern God of sea.

## NO. III.

The beginning of the VIIIth Book of the *ILIAD*,

*Translated by T. HOBBS.*

THE morning now was quite display'd, and Jove  
Upon Olympus' highest top was set;  
And all the Gods and Goddesses above,  
By his command, were there together met.  
And Jupiter unto them speaking, said,  
You Gods all, and you Goddesses, d'ye hear!  
Let none of you the Greeks or Trojans aid:  
I cannot do my work for you: forbear!  
For whomsoever I assisting see  
The Argives or the Trojans, be it known,  
He wounded shall return, and laught at be,  
Or headlong into Tartarus be thrown;  
Into the deepest pit of Tartarus,  
Shut in with gates of brass, as much below  
The common hell, as 'tis from hell to us.  
But if you will my power by trial know,  
Put now into my hand a chain of gold,  
And let one end thereof lie on the plain.  
And all you Gods and Goddesses take hold,  
You shall not move me, howsoe'er you strain.

At th' other end, if I my strength put to 't,  
I'll pull you Gods and Goddesses to me,  
Do what you can, and earth and sea to boot,  
And let you hang there till my power you see.  
The Gods were out of countenance at this,  
And to such mighty words durst not reply, &c.

## NO. IV.

*Ex Fabulis *Æsopis* FR. Jos. DESBILLONS.*

*Philomela, Corvus, et Babo.*

NATURA vernis pinxerat coloribus  
 Fœtus repullulantes; formosissimi  
 Ridebat anni blanda tempestas: dies  
 Festivitati candidæ simillimus  
 Abierat, et paraverat amicæ locum  
 Tranquillitati; solis aurei calor  
 Extulerat ab agris molliter tepentibus  
 Subtilem odorum copiam, quam paullulum  
 Noctis serenæ frigus addensaverat,  
 Et in parentis regna telluris sinens  
 Recidere, florum, floridarumque arborum  
 Diurnum odorem odore vincebat novo.

Philomela tales avida delicias capit,  
 Penitusque condit eruditis sensibus.  
 Sed efficaci mox scientiae obsequens,  
 Inflat canorum guttur, et ad omnes modos  
 Intentit; acerèt nunc et argutèt vibrat  
 Animosa vocem, more clangentis tubæ:  
 Nunc languida premit, frangit obscurat sonos;  
 Et deficere videtur; et medullitùs  
 Amore flagrans intimo liquescere.

Favonius, quem lilia inter et rosas  
 Dulci tenebat inertia vinctum sopor,  
 Evigilat ; hasque mirans tam volubiles,  
 Tam delicati flexioncs gutturis,  
 Ne casset illa metuit. Evigilat quoque  
 Corvus ; at incepto tardus ingenio, et sibi  
 Quod somnus abrumpatur ægrè etiam ferens ;  
 Quæ te mala, inquit, cuncta ubique dum silent,  
 Libido cogit, tam molestè ut perstrepas ?  
 Tibi videris bella cantrix : at tuæ  
 Mili cantilena, moneo, valdè displicant ;  
 Illaque jam nunc abstinere ni velis,  
 Ex me feres grande aliquod infortunium.

Philomela, atroces verita minas, obmutuit ;  
 Multoque manè cùm vix dilucesceret,  
 Periculosa præpotentis alitis  
 Viciniam relinquit, et se contulit  
 Celeriter in remotam solitudinem.  
 Ibi sese doctis artibus operam dare  
 Impunè tandem posse credit : et leves  
 Per summa gramina Zephyrorum spiritus  
 Cùm dulcè fremerent, sibilumque ramulis  
 Mobilibus arbor musicum omnis redderet,  
 Et Phœbus etiam candidâ purus face  
 Innubilas per auras lucem spargeret ;  
 His illa paret incitamentis : canit ;

**Simulque varias celebrat agrestis loci  
Amenitates, et voluptatem suam.**

**Sed in cavato proximæ truncæ arboris,  
Somno sepultus, qui latebat, horridus  
Bubo excitatur ; quamvis et lucem oderit,  
Paullum progressus, voce ferali increpat :  
Et, inficetos ni statim cantus, ait,  
Finieris, istam vocem importunissimam  
Ultor ego, vitamque simul eripiam tibi.  
Hic denique suum misera avis studium abjicit ;  
Timensque corvos nocte, bubones die,  
Silet, dolorve si urgeat, tantum gemit.**

**Fabella scripta est in homines quosdam feros,  
Musa quibus omnis suavior balem movet.**

## NO. V.

## EX FABULIS AESOPIIS, FR. JOS. DESBILLENS.

*Belluae Pestilentia laborantes.*

Calamitas, qua non alia diligentior  
 Vastandum ad orbem ab inferis emittitur,  
 Terribilis, invicta, efficax, intra dies  
 Paucos, avaram explere Plutonis domum,  
 Pestis, vocanda nomine quoniam est suo,  
 In belluarum eruperat latè genus.  
 Per multa fuerant corpora data jam neci :  
 Reliqua laboriosus urgebat stupor,  
 Tristi veterno languida : procul, hinc procul  
 Exterritus amor, et voluptas fugerant :  
 Ubique luctus, ubique regnabat pavor.

Ea tam atroci cladi percusus Leo  
 Jubet frequentes convocari belluas :  
 Tum concionem ubi satis magnam videt :  
 Cœlestis ira, unius ob noxas, ait,  
 Sæpe universam plectit multitudinem :  
 Nunc ergo judex quisque, non mollis sibi,  
 Descendat in se, dispiciatque sedulè

Siquid erit quo fors irritaverit Deos ;  
 Ut una demùm, ritè sese devovens,  
 Hostia, tot innocentes redimat victimas.  
 Ego equidem culpâ non carere me puto :  
 Nam oves et agnos, et juvencos et boves  
 Comedi ; nec pepercis ipsis custodibus :  
 Et hæc et alia ejusmodi quâm plurima  
 Patrata, fateor, jure nullo sunt meo.

Hic vulpis, ut quæ sponte adulari solet,  
 Vitam reclamat omnem tanti principis  
 Culpæ inveniri posse nulli obnoxiam :  
 Ovillis, inquit, bubulisque carnibus  
 Sæpe satiasti nobilem tuam famam :  
 Quid tum ? pecudibus magnus hic stultis honos  
 Est habitus, alvum quod tuam repleverint.  
 Aliquot præterea rusticos discarpere  
 Placuit : at hostes in modum hostilem licet  
 Tractare, nec jus bellicum ulcisci vetat.  
 Quæ visa postquam est plausibilis oratio ;  
 Sua confiteri scelera non dubitat tigris,  
 Non dubitat ursus, non lupus, non cæteri  
 Carnifices ; et qui nigra némant vertere  
 In candida, adsunt oratores callidi.

Restabat asinus : is suum bonâ fide  
 Scrutatur animum ; et invenire vix potest  
 Quidquam, notari dignum ; ad extreum tamen :

Mihi, quasi per nebulam, ait, in mentem venit,  
 Olim me divertisse, nescio quâ viâ,  
 Ad sacrificuli nescio cajus pratulum :  
 Herba bona, tenera, si benè memini, fuit ;  
 Attingere autem non licebat hanc mihi,  
 Nōram : abstinere volui : sed stimulans fames,  
 Et allientis opportunitas boni,  
 Et genius aliquis me malus, credo, impulit,  
 Labella dulci ut admoverem gramini,  
 Pauxillulumque pabuli decerperem.

Vix ea : repentè in infelicem bestiam  
 Ab universo coetu clamor tollitur :  
 Pereat scelestus, causa communis mali,  
 Asinus : nefandi pereat auctor criminis.  
 Sacrificuli herbam comedere ! quid hoc est, nisi  
 Horribile, junctum cum sacrilegio scelus !  
 Hinc nos videlicet hisce cladibus premit  
 Cœlestis ira : Numen ergo debitâ  
 Statim expiatur impia pecudis nece.  
 Diram hanc iniquus ipse Rex sententiam  
 Non erubescit comprobare : nec mora,  
 Fœdè immolandam tradit hostiam lupo.

Pessundari inopes, ubi potentium interest,  
 Facilè in grave scelus culpa mutatur levis.

## NO. VI.

A LEARNED and ingenious friend \*, to whom I am indebted for some very just remarks, of which I have availed myself in the preceding Essay, has furnished me with the following acute, and, as I think, satisfactory explanation of a passage in Tacitus, extremely obscure in itself, and concerning the meaning of which the commentators are not agreed.

Tacitus meaning to say, “ That Domitian, wishing to be “ the great, and indeed the only object in the empire, and “ that nobody should appear with any sort of lustre in it but “ himself, was exceedingly jealous of the great reputation “ which Agricola had acquired by his skill in war,” expresses himself thus :

In Vit. Agr. cap. 89.

*Id sibi maxime formidolosum, privati hominis nomen supra principis attolli. Frustra studia fori, et civilium artium decus in silentium acta, si militarem gloriam aliis occuparet: et cætera utcunque facilius dissimulari, ducis boni imperatoriam virtutem esse.* Which Gordon translates thus: “ Terrible “ above all things it was to him, that the name of a private “ man should be exalted above that of the Prince. In vain

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\* JAMES EDGAR, Esq; Commissioner of the Customs, Edinburgh.

“ had he driven from the public tribunals all pursuits of popular  
“ eloquence and fame, in vain repressed the renown of every  
“ civil accomplishment, if any other than himself possessed  
“ the glory of excelling in war: Nay, however he might  
“ dissemble every other distaste, yet to the person of Empe-  
“ ror properly appertained the virtue and praise of being a  
“ great general.”

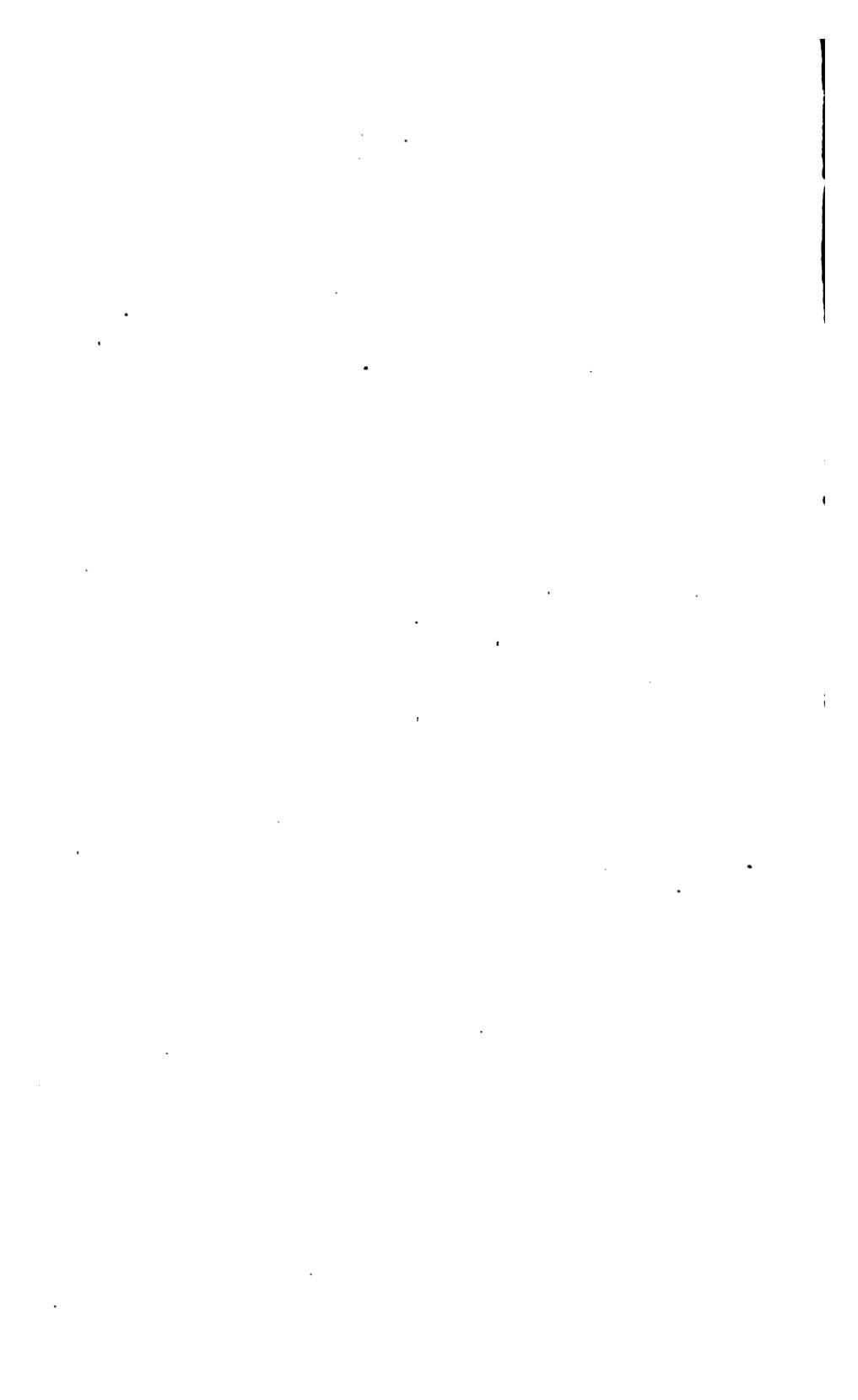
‘ This translation is very good, as far as the words “ civil  
“ accomplishment,” but what follows is not, in my opinion,  
the meaning of Tacitus’s words, which I would translate thus:

—“ If any other than himself should become a great object  
“ in the empire, as that man must necessarily be who pos-  
“ sesses military glory. For however he might conceal a  
“ value for excellence of every other kind, and even affect  
“ a contempt of it, yet he could not but allow, that skill in  
“ war, and the talents of a great General, were an ornament  
“ to the Imperial dignity itself.”

‘ Domitian did not pretend to any skill in war; and therefore the word “ *alius*” could never be intended to express a competitor with him in it.’

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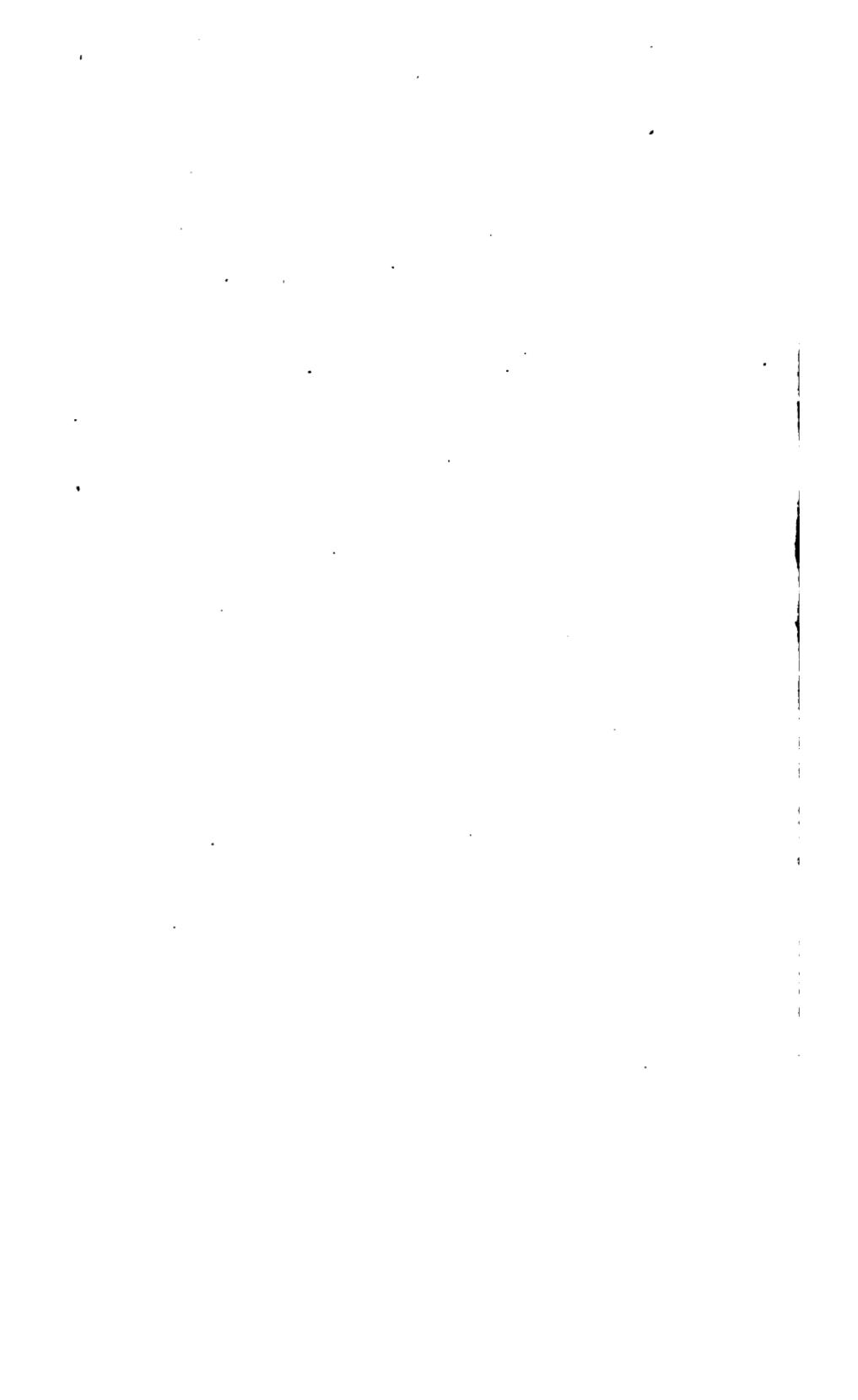
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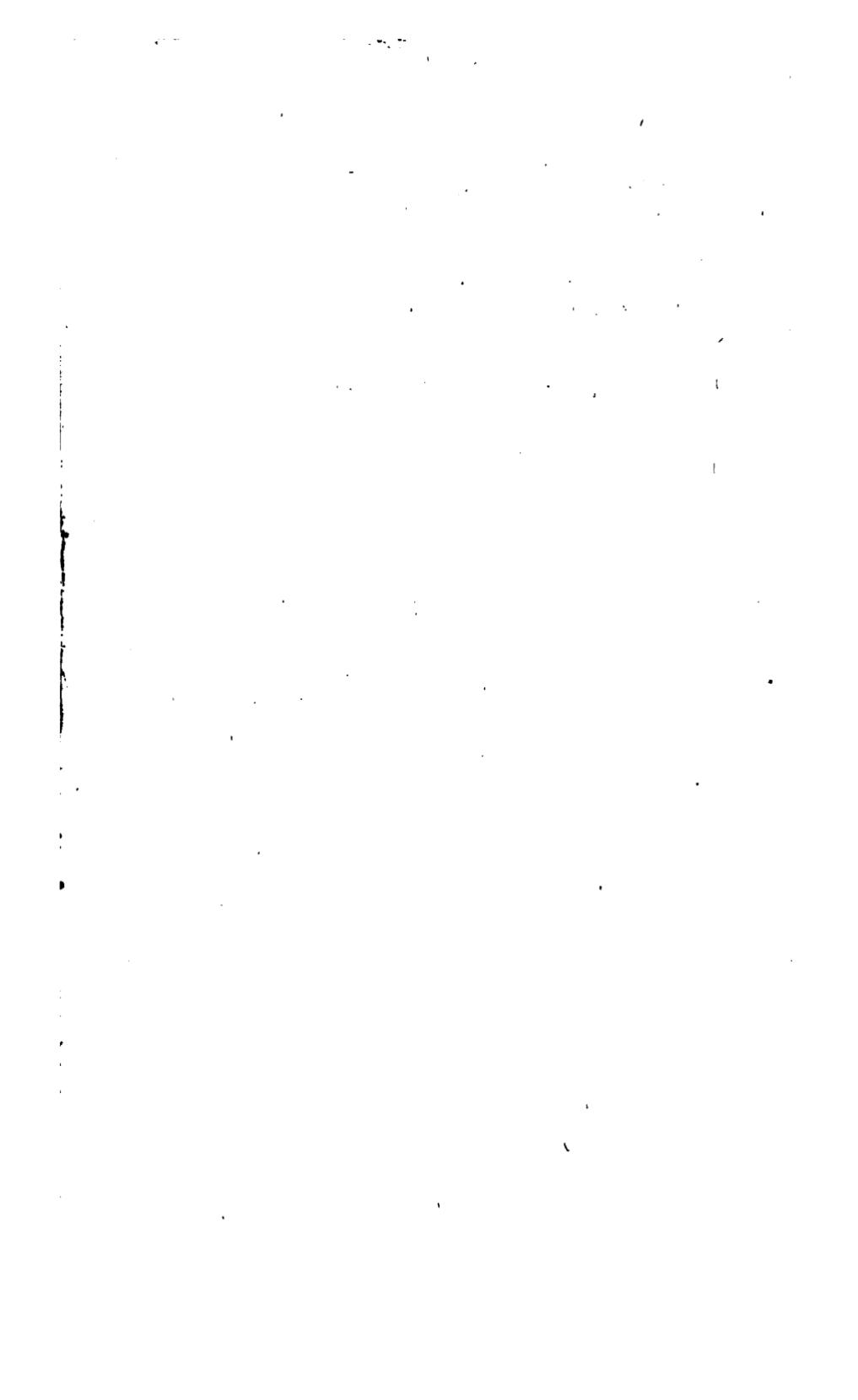
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